

Sane Guruji



The sculpture reproduced on the endpaper depicts a scene where three soothsayers are interpreting to King Suddhodana the dream of Queen Maya, mother of Lord Buddha. Below them is seated a scribe recording the interpretation. This is perhaps the earliest available pictorial record of the art of writing in India.

From : Nagarjunakonda, 2nd century A.D.

Courtesy : National Museum, New Delhi.

Makers of Indian Literature

Sane Guruji

G. P. Pradhan



SAHITYA AKADEMI



Sahitya Akademi

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Jeevan Tara, 23A/44X, Diamond Harbour Road, Calcutta 700 053
Guna, 304-305, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Madras 600 018
ADA Rangamandira, 109, J. C. Road, Bangalore 560 002

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First Published 1995

Rs. 15

ISBN 81-7201-722-7

Published by the Sahitya Akademi
and printed at Sadhana Press, 431, Shaniwar Peth,
Pune 411 030

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SANE GURUJI - A LIFE SKETCH

“That alone is true religion
which offers love to the whole world”

This was not just a couplet from a poem by Sane Guruji, he practised this religion all his life, through words and deeds. He particularly loved children, wrote inimitable stories for them and felt that it was only when he gladdened the hearts of children that he would become God's good man. Sane Guruji's life and his writings were merged with each other. He cast a spell over his readers by his masterpiece “Shyamchi Aii” (Shyam's mother), an autobiographic narration which is a lyrical portrayal of the love of a mother who stands as a symbol of simplicity, purity and sympathy.

Sane Guruji's life was a story of suffering and sacrifice. Suffering chastened his mind and developed in him an infinite capacity for sympathising with other sufferers. Sacrifice was his second nature and he was happy only when he lived for others and worked for a noble cause. His writing is an expression of his sensitive mind, and of his intense love for children. His stories and the letters which he wrote to his niece Sudha are like a pleasant breeze which wafted over the blossoming mind of a child.

Pandurang, which was Sane Guruji's first name, was born on 24th Dec. 1899 in a lower middle class family at Palgad in Ratnagiri district. His father popularly known as Bhaurao was a simple person, who had suffered imprisonment for six months in the Swadeshi movement. Pandurang's mother, Yashodabai was a pious and a devout housewife, whose main aim in life was to bring up her children to be virtuous and fearless. She was a very kind and loving woman and treated the maid-servant too as a member of her family. When she taught her children cleanliness she told them, “Your mind also must be clean and full of love for others.” During the impressionable days

of Pandurang's life, his personality was mainly moulded by his mother who told him that truth and goodness were far more important than wealth and that without character and knowledge, life would be worthless. Bhaurao, who was an early riser, made the children get up early and recite the Bhupalies - devotional verses sung at dawn. In the evening, he would tell them stories from Ramayana and Mahabharat and made them recite 'Shlokas'.

Pandurang's birth place, Palgad is a small village in the northern part of Ratnagiri district. Palgad is a typical village in Konkan, living in poverty and yet a place of scenic beauty. The coconut and the beetlenut trees, the cluster of suru trees, the rivulets flowing at different places, the bright red earth and the lush green fields--all these created in the mind of Pandurang a love for nature's beauty. At an early age, he had to leave Palgad and later in life, he seldom returned there. However, his home and the bountiful nature around it, continued to have a special place in his heart, and wherever he was, he always became nostalgic and recollected in his mind the mango-trees, the tall coconut trees, the delicate and fragrant flowers, the torrential rains during the monsoons and the pleasant breeze in summer at Palgad. However, more than nature, he always remembered his affectionate mother and her simple, earnest words, sometimes harsh, sometimes filled with anxiety but always expressive of her loving care. He parted from her at the age of twelve, and she died before he had passed the matriculation examination. However, her personality continued to be the most powerful and profound influence on him throughout his life.

When Pandurang was in a primary school, there was a partition in his joint family. As a result his parents had to leave the ancestral home. The financial condition of Bhaurao - Pandurang's father - deteriorated, but his mother worked hard and enabled the family to make both ends meet. Pandurang had his Primary education at Palgad and at the age of twelve he was sent to his aunt at Dapoli, the Tahshil town, which was at a distance of twelve miles from Palgad. The Government High School at Dapoli was known both for the excellent education imparted to students and the discipline inculcated in them. Pandurang's sensitive mind flowered in the pleasant atmosphere in the school. However, he could not afford to pay the fees and had to leave the school. He then went to Aundh, a small town in Satara district. Life was very hard and young Pandurang had to struggle much for pursuing his studies. Unfortunately, there was an epidemic of Plague at Aundh and Pandurang had to return to Palgad. One of his schoolmates, Ram, was

studying in Pune. Pandurang wrote to him and when he informed that Pandurang would get free accommodation there, he came to Pune and joined the Nutan Marathi Vidyalaya. On three days in a week Pandurang got meals in three different families, as was the custom in those days. He did all sorts of work and quietly put up with insults that came to his lot. He had to go without food on some days and yet he devoted all his energies to studies. He read with great zest and attended the public lectures of eminent leaders in Pune.

He appeared for the Matriculation examination and was happy to find that he had fared very well. When the examination was over, Pandurang went to his native place and was greatly shocked when he learnt of the death of his mother. Pandurang had an intense affection for his mother, and remembered all that she had done for him. He was stunned by her death and for some days, felt that the future was bleak. However, he had got good marks in the Matriculation examination and he decided to join College.

Pandurang came to Pune and joined S.P.College where he got a Scholarship and also some remission in fees. He took tuitions. On certain days he cooked food for himself. His friend Ram also helped him. Life was hard and yet Pandurang regarded the opportunity for higher education as a very precious one. He spent many hours in the library and read voraciously. He read the books of Ruskin, and Tolstoy. The poetry of Rabindranath Tagore moved him. He also liked the poems of Whitman and translated into Marathi, some of the poems from 'The Blades of Grass'. He also read the writings of Lokamanya Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi. He joined the scout-organisation and participated in the literacy campaign. Life in Pune was full of activities and young Pandurang was thrilled by the movement for Swadeshi and participated in it enthusiastically. He wrote articles in the College Magazine and gave talks in a small group of friends. He gave a talk on Swami Ram Teertha, which was highly appreciated by his friends. He came to be known among his fellow - students as 'Scholar Sane.' Prof. D. V. Potdar, the eminent historian, was the Professor of Marathi in S.P.College. He was impressed by Sane's intelligence and his prolific reading. Prof. Potdar encouraged him to write. Sane, at this early age, wrote the biography of Gopal Krishna Gokhale. The book was awarded a prize. He also wrote a small book on the life of Lokhitwadi, the well-known social reformer in Maharashtra. Sane passed his B.A. Examination with Sanskrit and Marathi. He had a rare memory and a very lucid style of writing. Prof. Potdar always

mentioned Sane as an ideal student and very much appreciated the essays written by him. Sane offered Philosophy as his subject for M.A. He studied in Pune for one year and went to Tatva Dnyan Mandir (Temple of Philosophy) at Amalner, which was recognised as a Post-graduate centre. He took his M.A. in Philosophy. However, he was rather unhappy over the atmosphere in the Institute of Philosophy. Sane was a sensitive young man, who regarded Philosophy as the mainspring of Life. He had highest regard for Lokmanya Tilak who, in his Gita Rahasya, had propounded that Bhagwat-Gita preached the philosophy of action - Karma Yoga, and who had also practised Karma Yoga in Life. Sane thought that the teachers in Tatva Dynan Mandir lived in an ivory tower and were cut off from the problems of society around them. There was a group of idealist teachers who were running a High-school and a students' hostel at Amalner. Sane was attracted to this institution. After passing his M.A. examination, Sane decided to join this group of idealist teachers and became a teacher in Pratap High School at Amalner. Haribhau Mohani, Gokhale and others warmly welcomed Sane to their fold. Besides teaching, Sane also accepted the responsibility of looking after the Students' Hostel.

Sane had the heart of a mother as it were and showered affection on the boys in the Hostel, as was done by his mother in his case. He shaped and moulded the minds of those simple, uncouth boys from the rural area, not through precept but through practice. Sane was a gifted teacher, who held his class spell-bound, when he taught poetry and history. He was very shy among the group of teachers, but when he was in the midst of students, his mind opened out. He told them stories, laughed with them and composed simple yet moving poems for them. The boys, who earlier feared the rector, found in Sane an affectionate teacher, who made them sing, play and whose teaching was a source of great joy for them. Sane came to be known as 'Sane Sir' (Guruji). The students in the hostel, had shortcomings which are normal in an adolescent age. They never kept their clothes or books in order. When Sane Sir had some leisure, he quietly went to the rooms in the hostel, swept the floor and put everything in order. When the boys came to know this, they realised their mistake and started keeping their rooms clean and tidy. When Gopal, the peon of the hostel, fell ill Sane Sir nursed him like a mother. The boys were moved. Sane had made them understand that the school was a family. Some students were naughty, some were arrogant. But Sane taught them to share their joy with others and share also the sorrows of others. Sane Sir arranged

certain functions which were unique. He planted trees around the hostel, watered them and when buds on some plants were about to bloom, he asked the boys to celebrate the "Festival of buds". He thus taught them to love Nature and worship her.

Sane Sir started a news-paper for students. He himself wrote it out entirely. In one issue, there would be a small simple poem, some novel scientific information, some tit-bits which made the boys laugh and sometimes some mild criticism of a wrong action on the part of a student or a group of students. The boys eagerly rushed to read this news-paper displayed on the notice-board of the school. The experiment was a great success. Later on Sane Sir, started a monthly Magazine 'Vidyarthi' for all students. Owing to the fervent idealism of Sane the Magazine became immensely popular.

Sane who always used Swadeshi goods now came under the influence of Gandhiji's ideas. He started wearing Khadi. Many students who were under the influence of Sane's personality, started wearing Khadi. Sane Guruji inculcated patriotism in his students. He told them that love for one's mother and love for one's motherland were the noblest virtues in life. Sane wrote about the life and work of Chittaranjan Das, Rabindranath Tagore and other great men of India in the Magazine 'Vidyarthi'. He also introduced his readers to the noble ideas of Gandhiji. Sane sometimes published in 'Vidyarthi' a translation of an editorial written by Gandhiji in Nav-Jeevan.

The session of the Indian National Congress was held at Lahore, over which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru presided. On 31st December 1929, Pandit Nehru declared in the open session that complete Independence was India's goal and the resolution embodying the ideal of "Sampoorna Swaraj" was unanimously adopted. People all over India were thrilled by the declaration and responded enthusiastically to Pandit Nehru's appeal for observing 26th January as the Independence Day. In Amalner, a Tahsil place in north Maharashtra, Sane Sir was also moved and on 26th January wrote a poem giving expression to his ecstasy over the idea of India's freedom. Sane was very eager to sacrifice everything for India's independence. When Gandhiji started his 'Dandi Yatra' and appealed to people to participate in the 'Salt-Satyagraha', Sane decided to take a plunge into the movement. However, he was a conscientious teacher. He completed his work in school and at the end of the academic year on 29th April, 1930, he resigned from Pratap High School, in order to join the struggle for freedom. Sane Guruji knew that his strength lay in communicating the

message of freedom to the people. He started touring the district which then was known as 'Khandesh'. He addressed meetings and met people in small groups. Sane, who was extremely shy in personal life, was a transformed person when he went to the platform. He spoke in simple language, and his earnestness and rare sincerity touched the hearts of the people. He expressed his ideas in a direct manner with the help of familiar illustrations from day-to-day life. He never took the pose of a leader. His style was conversational and those who listened to him were immediately drawn into the subject of his speech. Sane who had an extremely retentive memory quoted the saint-poets of Maharashtra, particularly Sant Tukaram. His speech was full of emotional appeal. He drew a graphic picture of India's poverty and told people how they were exploited by the British. He aroused the sense of self-respect in the people, and asked them, "How long would you meekly submit to the insults at the hands of British and how long would you allow them to hold your motherland captive? Is it not your duty to break the chains which bind Bharat Mata?" He explained to the people that Swaraj was their birth-right and, the fight for Swaraj was a moral struggle. Sane Sir explained Gandhi's ideas of truth and non-violence and asked young men to be brave and sacrifice everything for winning freedom. Sane was a simple person, dressed in a simple manner, dhoti and kurta of Khadi, and white Gandhi cap. His personality was far from impressive. But the moment he started speaking of freedom, he used to cast a spell on the people around him. The bond of love was established between him and the simple farmers in the villages. They took him to their homes, where he ate their coarse bread with relish and slept on a coarse carpet spread on the ground. When he went to a farmer's house, he did not talk to grown-up people. He told stories to children and was very happy when the children flocked around him, played, shouted and sang.

Sane became a household name in villages. He did not complain of the hazards of travel and other inconveniences. He took everything in his stride. His mind was charged with the idea of freedom. He walked long distances on foot, kept late hours for writing articles for newspapers and devoted all his energies to the task of spreading the message of Satyagraha. As a result of this penance, hundreds of people responded to Sane's appeal and joined the Satyagraha movement. Those who could not participate in the movement, extended all help to those who were carrying on the movement. Government issued a warrant for Sane's arrest, because as a result of his speeches, the

freedom movement had spread in Khandesh District like wild fire. People became fearless and went to jail with a smile on their lips. Sane went from one village to another, spreading the message of Swaraj. The police pursued him and finally arrested him on 17th May, 1930. When he was tried by a Magistrate, Sane, like a true Satyagrahi, declared that he was happy and proud that he had the opportunity of participating in the freedom struggle. Sane was sentenced to fifteen months rigorous imprisonment and was fined Rs. 200/-, which he refused to pay and accepted more imprisonment instead. Sane was sent to the jail at Dhule. The Magistrate gave him 'B' Class but Sane refused to accept it and stayed in 'C' Class. Poetry is defined by Wordsworth as a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. Sane's mind was filled with the powerful feeling of patriotism and it had a spontaneous overflow in the poems which he wrote at the time. His famous poem was

“स्वातंत्र्याचे आम्ही शिपाई
सुखवू प्रियतम भारतभाई”

(We are the fighters for freedom. We shall make our Motherland happy.) In this poem Sane painted a beautiful picture of free India, a land of peace and plenty, where people would live with dignity and from where injustice of every kind would be eradicated, and which would embody the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. The Satyagrahis in Dhule Jail sang this poem with great gusto.

Sane was a devout person, who regarded God as an incarnation of Truth, Beauty and Goodness. In one of his poems he prayed to God that the garden of his life should fully bloom -- “प्रभू माझी जीवनवाग फुलय.” The intensity of emotions in the poems of Sane and the simple and moving words expressing noble sentiments, touched the chords of the heart of the people and evoked similar feelings in them.

After some months Sane was transferred to Trichanapally Prison in the then Madras Presidency. Sane had a rare aptitude for learning languages. Marathi was his mother-tongue. He had studied English and Sanskrit in College. He was familiar with Hindi, Gujrati and Bengali. At Trichanapalli he learnt Tamil. Sane was an ardent follower of Gandhiji. He knew that in Gandhiji's Ashram, the inmates had to do all jobs by turns. They had to do the work of sweepers and also of scavengers. In the Jail Sane requested the jailor to give him the work of cleaning the latrines. The jailor even failed to understand the request at first. But Sane was insistent, the Superintendent of Jail at last relented and allowed this saintly prisoner to do the work which

was detested by all.

Sane was released from Trichanapalli prison, along with other prisoners, after the Gandhi - Irwin Pact. He returned to Khandesh. At a village called Asode near Jalgaon, a gathering of satyagrahies from Khandesh was arranged and Acharya Vinoba Bhave was invited to address the Satyagrahies. Acharya Bhave owing to his scholarship and character evoked respect in the minds of the Satyagrahies. Sane, with his simplicity and sincerity evoked love in the minds of Satyagrahies. Sane, was a shy person, who kept himself away from leaders. But he was drawn to Acharya Bhave by some unknown force and Vinobaji instinctively understood the rare qualities of Sane. Both were drawn to each other and Sane proudly declared that he was a faithful disciple of Vinobaji.

Sane, in his speech told the Satyagrahies, "Our struggle has only taken a brief pause. We are passing through moments of peace but it is only peace before the storm. The struggle for freedom would be resumed within a short time. Let us be ready to accept the challenge of our times. Let us be prepared for our next parting from homes and hearths and for another long term in prison."

Sane began a whirlwind tour of Khandesh. In his speeches he spoke with great feelings about the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev, and said, "These noble sons of Mother India laid down their lives for freedom. Is it not our duty to follow in their foot-steps ? To one who is a devotee of his motherland, a prison is like a palace. I appeal to you to march with me to that palace." Sane's fiery speeches created great enthusiasm among the people. To the simple farmers of Khandesh, Sane was a saint who regarded his motherland as his God. Sane also repeated in his speeches, "देश हाच माझा देव आहे."

Lord Willingdon, Viceroy of India, decided to crush the Satyagraha movement and took repressive measures all over the country. Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and rest of the leaders were arrested. In Khandesh, Sane defied the ban on meetings and braved the repression by the Government. He was arrested and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment. He was sent to Dhule jail, where he met the old familiar faces of fellow freedom fighters, and was very happy when Acharya Vinoba Bhave was brought to the same prison-yard. Sane was always surrounded by young satyagrahies. The simple farmers of Khandesh, did not like to call him Sane Sir, and started addressing him as 'Sane Guruji.' Thus he came to be known all over Maharashtra as Sane Guruji.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave said that language must not be a barrier to knowledge. He, therefore, translated Bhagwad-Gita into Marathi and called it "Gitai - गीताई". But the Satyagrahies said that it was difficult for them to understand the message of Gita. Acharya Bhave, then agreed to give discourses - 'Pravachanas' on Gita in order to explain the teachings of the great philosophic work in a simple manner. Acharya Vinoba Bhave gave one 'Pravachana' every Sunday on one Adhyaya (canto) of Gita. Sane Guruji listened with rapt attention and took down some notes. Afterwards, he wrote down the entire 'Pravachanas'. Vinobaji was pleasantly surprised to find that Sane Guruji had given a verbatim report of his Pravachanas. The book 'Gita Pravachane' has emerged as a classic and has been translated in all Indian languages. Vinobaji said, 'Bhagwad-Gita created a perennial bond of love between Sane Guruji and myself. Sane Guruji is a saint in the tradition of Dnyaneshwar and Tukaram.'

Sane Guruji was transferred to Nasik jail. There he wrote his immortal book "Shyamchi Aai" -- Shyam's mother. In this autobiographic narration, Sane Guruji has drawn a memorable character sketch of his mother. He recreated his own childhood and boyhood and drew a graphic picture of Palgad -- his place of birth.

Sane Guruji's mind blossomed during this period. He translated Rabindra Nath Tagore's "Sadhana" in Marathi. He also wrote a number of fine poems. His poem on tears - "Ashru" is unique in many respects. In another fine poem, Sane Guruji sang about "real religion" which enabled men to love the world, to sympathise with the downtrodden and the oppressed and created bonds of affection between all the children of God.

After his release from prison, Sane Guruji came to Pune for a few days. He lived with the college-going students from Khandesh and cooked food for them. He devoted the rest of his time to writing.

Sane Guruji in his childhood was brought up in the traditional atmosphere of an orthodox Brahmin family. He recited the different "Suktas" and "Mantras". Later on when he lived in the wide world outside he began to think in an independent way. As a student of Sanskrit, he read the Vedic Literature. He felt that the original noble concept of Hindu religion was distorted by the unjust caste system which created inequality and did gross injustice to the so called Dalits and treated them as untouchables. Sane Guruji felt that it was necessary to make the common man conscious of the noble heritage of Bharatiya Sanskriti and also make him realize the need for removing

the shortcomings and the defects which had become a part of the orthodox Hindu religion.

Sane Guruji was a Teacher interested in giving the correct perspective of religion to the common man. He, therefore, started writing a book ‘Bharatiya Sanskriti’. Once Sane Guruji started writing, he never faltered. While elucidating an idea, he gave appropriate references, and apt words flowed from his pen. He had completed the writing of ‘Shyamchi Aai’ in Nasik Prison in four days. He wrote his book ‘Bharatiya Sanskriti’, within a short span of time. This book is the finest flower of Sane Guruji's genius.

Mahatma Gandhi always said that Swaraj would become a reality only when the message of Swaraj would reach the villages in India. It was, therefore, decided to hold the Golden Jubilee Session of the Congress in a village - Faizpur in Khandesh district of Maharashtra. Tremendous organisational work was necessary in order to enlist the support of the people and to make the necessary preparations for holding the Session. The workers of the Congress, approached Sane Guruji, who readily agreed to carry out any work that would be entrusted to him. Sane Guruji toured the villages, addressed a number of meetings and as a result a wave of enthusiasm spread to all corners of Khandesh. There was excellent teamwork among the local leaders, the workers and the volunteers; and the session of the Indian National Congress was a resounding success.

On 6th April 1938, Sane Guruji paid homage to the martyrs of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and started a Weekly ‘Congress’ in order to convey to the people, the message of the Congress. Sane Guruji announced that his Weekly would give vent to the woes of the poor people.

And then began the Second World War in 1939. The Congress Ministries in seven provinces resigned as a protest against the declaration by the Vice-Roy that India had joined war as an ally of the British Empire. Sane Guruji realised that the struggle for freedom was imminent. He started going from village to village to arouse the people. He composed simple and yet moving songs which were sung in the meetings addressed by him. One of the songs was -

“आता उठवू सारे रान
आता पेटवू सारे रान
शेतकऱ्यांच्या राज्यासाठी
कामकऱ्यांच्या राज्यासाठी
लावू पणाला प्राण”

“We shall stake our lives for bringing in the Raj of the peasants and workers.”

Sane Guruji's students who were scattered all over Khandesh started the movement of “Prakash Mandal” in order to bring the light of new ideas to the people. These students also published a collection of Sane Guruji's Poems and named the collection as ‘Patri’ - (leaves collected by girls in Konkan during the month of Shrawan as offerings to God.)

The youths in Nasik district decided to hold a conference at Chandwad. When Sane Guruji agreed to address the conference, students gathered in huge numbers. He made a fiery speech and appealed to youths to sacrifice everything for India's freedom. He was later on arrested and in January 1941 was sentenced to two years, rigorous imprisonment.

Sane Guruji was in Dhule Jail when Gandhiji asked the British to Quit India and prepared the nation for the final assault on the British Empire for winning freedom. Sane Guruji was to be released on 10th August 1942. Blake, the superintendent of Jail, had highest respect for Sane Guruji. He set Sane Guruji free in the early hours of the morning and Sane Guruji immediately went to a friend, before the Police arrived to arrest him. He went to Pune and established contacts with the freedom fighters who had gone underground. Mahadevbhai Desai, who was detained in Aghakhan Palace along with Gandhiji, died of heart attack on 15th August, 1942. Sane Guruji wrote a moving article, which was published as a bulletin and thousands of copies of that bulletin were distributed all over Maharashtra. He then went to Bombay to join the group of underground socialist leaders -- S. M. Joshi, N. G. Goray, Shirubhau Limaye and others. He changed his usual clothes and in disguise went to places where groups of youths flocked together. He addressed these meetings and in response to his appeal many groups joined the freedom movement. During the day, Sane Guruji generally stayed at a place at Tardeo, the place known as “Mushak Mahal”, a palace of rats ! Sane Guruji cooked food for his colleagues and his maternal instincts were satisfied when he fed heartily the underground workers, who after a hectic day's work returned to Mushak Mahal, tired and exhausted. Sane Guruji nursed his underground colleagues when they fell ill. He jokularly remarked, ‘I cannot throw a bomb; I feel greater pleasure in feeding you, in nursing you, thus ensuring the health and vitality of those who would throw bombs !’ Sane Guruji also wrote bulletins and secret circulars during these underground days. In April, 1943, the police succeeded

in detecting 'Mushak-Mahal' as a resort of underground leaders. On 18th April, Sane Guruji and other socialist leaders were arrested. The Government wanted to elicit all information about the underground movement, but Sane Guruji and his comrades refused to give any information. The Government then decided to prosecute the important underground workers. Sane Guruji was one of the accused in the Maharashtra Conspiracy Case. However, Government could get no substantial evidence and Sane Guruji and others were detained in Yeravada Central Prison. In jail, Sane Guruji taught Bengali to the young students, who were detained for their participation in the QUIT INDIA Movement. Acharya Jawadekar, the eminent Gandhian thinker, was in the same prison yard. He gave talks on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of life, for seven days. Sane Guruji carefully took down the notes and afterwards wrote a verbatim report of speeches given by Acharya Jawadekar. Acharya Jawadekar retouched the notes and it was published as a book "Mahatma Gandhi Darshan". Sane Guruji said, " 'Bhagawad-Geeta' brought me close to Vinobaji, and Gandhi-Darshan created a permanent bond between me and Acharya Jawadekar." Sane Guruji was later on transferred to Nasik Jail, where he wrote two books. 'Islami Samskruti' and 'Chini Sanskruti'.

After twenty-one months of imprisonment, Sane Guruji was set free. After his release, he started working for the 'Rashtra Seva Dal' - the youth organisation with socialist ideals. He devoted his energies to the task of eradicating untouchability. He was invited to all places in Maharashtra. Owing to his love for the workers, he accepted all invitations and went to far off corners of Maharashtra. His very presence was a source of inspiration to people and particularly to youths. In spite of these hectic activities, Sane Guruji found time to write. He wrote stories for children, which were immensely liked by school-going boys and girls. Ten collections of these stories were published under the caption "गोड गोष्टी" - "Sweet Stories", Wherever Sane Guruji went, children flocked around him. He told them stories for atleast two hours. He was a gifted story-teller and had unbounded love for children. He always said, 'He, who entertains children, establishes a close relationship with God.' Sane Guruji was shy in the presence of elders and seldom talked with them, but was full of mirth and enthusiasm, in the company of children. Besides writing a marathi version of fine novels such as 'La Miserable', 'Silas Mariner' and 'The Mayor of Casterbridge', Sane Guruji also translated Tolstoy's book, 'What is art'.

In 1946, Sane Guruji felt an inner urge to do something for removing the stigma of untouchability. He wrote that the Vithal-Mandir of Pandharpur was the most sacred place in Maharashtra and he appealed to people to open the doors of that temple to all, irrespective of their caste. Sane Guruji, accompanied by the veteran revolutionary Senapati Bapat, toured Maharashtra for one year for this noble cause. Thousands of people of Maharashtra were moved by Sane Guruji's appeal and wanted that the doors of the Vithal-Mandir should be thrown open to all. However, the orthodox Shastries and the Badwes, who had the right of worshipping the God, refused to yield. Sane Guruji then started his fast on 1st May, 1947. Dadasaheb Mavalankar, the worthy Speaker of the Central Legislative Council, explained to Gandhiji the ideological position of Sane Guruji and told him about Guruji's noble character. Mavalankar also prevailed on Badwe and Utpat, who at last submitted an affidavit to the Court that they were ready to give entrance to all people into the Vithal-Mandir. Sane Guruji thus succeeded in the realization of his ideal. He ended his fast on 10th May, 1947. Gandhiji, in his prayer meeting said, 'I have today received a happy news - the ancient and famous Vithal-Mandir at Pandharpur would now be open to Harijans. The credit for this happy event goes to Sane Guruji, who had started a fast unto death, for this purpose.'

On 15th August, 1947, people all over India celebrated the First Independence Day with great joy and enthusiasm. Sane Guruji was happy because India was now free, but was sad because India was partitioned. Gandhiji stayed alone in a hut in a slum in Calcutta. He fasted and offered prayers. Sane Guruji stayed alone in a room at Pune and prayed to God that the violence in the mind of people should be removed. At 12 o'clock at midnight when the Tri-Colour was unfurled by Pandit Nehru on the red fort at Delhi, Sane Guruji lit a candle in his room. To him a candle was a symbol of the effort for giving light by burning oneself out.

On 30th January, 1948, Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by Nathuram Godse, a fanatic Hindu. Sane Guruji was greatly shocked and deeply grieved by this dastardly deed. He started a fast for 21 days. He said that it was an act of 'self-purification' and an effort to remove the poison of communalism from our society.'

Sane Guruji regarded the Rashtra-Seva-Dal, the Socialist-youth Organisation as an instrument of transforming society and of ushering in an era of social and economic equality. He always said, 'Seva Dal

is the breath of my life' and appealed to the volunteers to render services to society in all possible ways. Sane Guruji was advised rest; but he wanted to spread the light of knowledge and bring happiness to the downtrodden. He had a powerful pen, but he said that 'the broom that cleaned was far superior to the pen that wrote.' Sane Guruji devoted his energies to constructive work, but he was also conscious that he could also serve the society with his pen. He, therefore, started 'Sadhana Weekly' on 15th August 1948. A group of dedicated young men assisted him in this new undertaking, and within a short time, 'Sadhana' earned a place of respect in the cultural life of Maharashtra.

Sane Guruji always thought that 'Unity in the midst of diversity' was the noblest feature of India's life and regarded the different Indian languages as powerful instruments of national integration. In May, 1949, Marathi Sahitya Sammelana (Marathi Literary Conference) was held in Pune under the Presidentship of Acharya Javadekar. Sane Guruji attended this Conference and moved his Resolution of Antar-Bharati. While explaining his concept of "Antar-Bharati", he said, "We, in different regions of India should learn each-other's languages; the cultural exchange alone would create bonds of love among people speaking different languages and would thus enable us to realize our dream of the unity of India." He was ably supported by Mahamahopadhyay D.V. Potdar, who had taught Sane Guruji, when he was a student in S.P. College.

In May, 1950, Sane Guruji addressed the volunteers of the Rashtra Seva Dal in the training camp held at Sangli. He explained the idea of the dignity of physical labour and appealed to volunteers to build a new social order and create a new nation by the sweat of their brow. His speech was very moving and S. M. Joshi and his colleagues in the Rashtra Seva Dal decided to start the experiment of 'Shramadan-Pathak'-- a land army which would clean the tanks in villages, build roads and bring about a revolution in agriculture. Sane Guruji thus was making the young generation aware of the new horizons ahead and inspired them to work for 'Nava-Bharat'.

Sane Guruji was a restless soul. In the company of children, he was full of joy. But he felt sad at the deteriorating conditions in society. He was a visionary but there was a growing feeling in his mind that he was far away from realizing his dream. By nature, Sane Guruji was an introvert, who never expressed his feelings to others. He fasted on Friday because on Friday Gandhiji was assassinated. On Friday, 9th June, 1950, Sane Guruji appeared to be in high spirits. He took his

bath and in a pleasant mood wrote his last letter in which he had asked his colleagues to strive for the ideal of democratic socialism through satyagraha. Sane Guruji also remembered Acharya Vinoba Bhave. He kept thirty rupees in his pocket with a note :

‘For my funeral expenses.’

Sane Guruji took sleeping pills and went to sleep. He was then alone in his room in Medha Bhuvan in Parsi Colony, Dadar. When his friends, staying with him at ‘Medha-Bhuvan’ returned, they were shocked to find Sane Guruji still asleep. A doctor was called and he was removed to the hospital. But in spite of all efforts, Sane Guruji breathed his last at 4.00 a.m. on 11th June, 1950. Such was the tragic end of a noble life.



'PATRI' - A COLLECTION OF POEMS

During his student days, Sane Guruji had read and studied Marathi Literature in general and Marathi Poetry in particular. He enjoyed the study of literature. In Marathi, the Saint Poets - Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram, Namdeo, Eknath, Ramdas and others have written devotional poetry. Dnyaneshwar has written a commentary on Bhagwat-Gita in which there is a rare combination of philosophic wisdom and beautiful poetry. Pandurang Sane was brought up in an orthodox family and was greatly influenced by his mother. He was therefore, attracted to the Saint-Poets in Marathi at an early age. To young Pandurang, faith in God was a source of strength. He believed that God would help him in keeping away from evil. He was pious by nature and he was moved when he read the devotional poetry, particularly of Tukaram and Namdev. Later on, in High School he studied the poetry written by scholar poets like Moropant and Waman Pandit, but he was more impressed by the Poet Mukteshwar, whose rendering of Maha-Bharat in Marathi was a delight to read. At College, Sane made a critical study of Marathi poetry. While reading the 'Gatha' - a collection of poems written by Sant Tukaram, Sane was deeply moved. The devotional poetry of Saint Poets was a life-long influence on his mind and deepened his faith in God.

Young Pandurang, as a child listened to simple poetic compositions in the 'ओवी' form sung by his mother and other women around him. Pandurang very much relished the simplicity and the emotional content of these poems. Later on, wherever he went, he requested the women to sing the 'ओवी' and he jotted them down. Sane was the first person in Maharashtra to publish a collection of such songs - 'Stree Geete' ('स्त्री गीते') by women. He felt that these songs were an excellent reflection of the family-life in Maharashtra.

Thus, devotion to God and an appreciation of the transparent simplicity of a woman's mind, became the marked features of the mind

of Sane Guruji. He was never conscious of the qualities he possessed. As a student, he had to struggle hard for survival and still he devoted all his energies to studies. He was attracted to literature, which, he felt was a mirror held upto reality. Besides Marathi Poetry, Sane started reading the poems written by Rabindra Nath Tagore. He was deeply moved by 'Gitanjali' and 'Gardener'. Sane Guruji also read English Poetry and liked the Nature-Poetry of Wordsworth and of the American Poet, Walt Whitman. While reading Walt Whitman, Sane Guruji who was a lover of Nature, felt that he had met a kindred soul and rendered some of the poems of Whitman in Marathi.

Sane Guruji was not sociable by nature. He was shy and preferred to be left alone. He was an introvert, in whose life emotions, rather than intellect, predominated. Whenever, an emotion became very powerful, Sane Guruji felt like giving expression to it through words. Most of the poems that he wrote, were a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings. There was no artifice in his writing. In fact, he wrote for himself. He never thought of publishing his poems. Whenever he felt that the poem written by him was not a faithful expression of what he experienced, Sane Guruji destroyed that poem. Only when he felt an irresistible urge from within to give expression to his overpowering emotions, that Sane Guruji wrote a Poem. He was not keen on communication. To him expression of an emotion through a poem gave peace and tranquility to the mind. Such poetry is only a sincere utterance and never a conscious effort. But there is in it a shortcoming viz. that the detachment with which an artist looks at his own experience is absent. A great poet communicates his feelings or experiences in such a manner that the reader gets involved in them and for sometime identifies himself with the Poet's mood. This never happened in the case of Sane Guruji's poems, because he was never keen on communication. He wrote almost only for himself.

There are three strands in the poems written by Sane Guruji - devotion to God, love for Nature and devotion to his motherland. Sane Guruji was a restless soul and his mind experienced great pangs and agonies. Devotion to God enabled him to escape from these agonies. Many of his poems were prayers to God. In one poem he compared his life to a ship caught in a storm. He prayed to God to help him reach the shore safely. The storm of passion and desire overwhelmed the poet and he felt that God alone would be able to take him out of it and take him to the land of peace and piety. In an other poem, Sane Guruji stated that he had fallen in a well enveloped in darkness and he prayed

to God to lift him up and take him to his bosom.

In yet another poem, Sane Guruji prayed to God to send him a ray of light which would drive away the darkness in his life and illuminate it. Sane Guruji urged God to wash off all his sins, to purify all his desires and take him to the sublime world of virtue. In all such poems, one heard the echoes of the agonised mind of Sane Guruji and also his intense craving for a noble life of sacrifice. It was indeed remarkable that Sane Guruji not once desired anything which was worldly. He never prayed to God for granting him any material favour. In fact he was always willing, nay eager, to suffer for others and prayed to God that his desire to serve and to suffer should be fulfilled. Sane Guruji always yearned for inner peace. He had profound faith that God alone was his saviour and that He would quell the storms in his mind and enable him to die for a noble cause. He believed that such a noble death alone would give him eternal peace. However, he did not want to run away from life. He knew that there were struggles and there were trials. His prayer was that whatever the trial, he should cling to truth and goodness. He was conscious of the fact that in life there was truth and also falsehood, beauty as well as ugliness, good and also evil. His prayer to God was that his life should be a perennial search for truth and a penance for the realisation of goodness and beauty in life. In one of his poems, Sane Guruji described his life as a garden and prayed to God that He should see that flowers bloomed in this garden.

Sane Guruji wrote poems from his student days but he had not shown them to any one. His poems were his secret. As a teacher at Amalner, when Sane Guruji wrote some fine songs for students, his friends and some of his students became conscious of the poetic quality of his mind. Later, some of his students almost compelled him to give them the notebooks in which he had written his poems. They saw in those poems a reflection of the noble spirit of Sane Guruji and decided to publish a collection of those poems. Sane Guruji was at first reluctant to give his consent. He said to his students, 'I am not a Poet. I have no imagination. I have expressed my emotions through rhymes. But I feel that this is not poetry. If you have read Mukteshwar and Balkavi, you would not ask me to publish what I have scribbled'. However, the students were determined to publish the collection of Poems and Sane Guruji at last relented. However, he asked the students to give the Title 'Patri' to the collection. In Maharashtra, in the month of Shravan, the Goddess Mangala Gauri is worshipped by the newly married girls on every Tuesday. These girls offer flowers

and also leaves of twelve types of trees. These leaves are collected in the early hours of the morning and are regarded as a sacred offering. Sane Guruji felt that his poems were essentially an offering to God. He thought that his poems had neither the beauty, nor the fragrance of flowers. They were like simple leaves collected by innocent girls as offerings to Mangala Gauri. The poems of Sane Guruji had, besides simplicity, the sacredness and the freshness of the leaves collected as 'Patri' for worshipping the Goddess who symbolised मांगल्य - all that was pure and sacred. Sane Guruji worshipped मांगल्य - sanctity and purity in life and his poems were the sacred leaves required for worshipping the incarnations of sanctity and purity. The last poem in this collection is 'Patri', in which Sane Guruji had given expression to all these ideas.

Sane Guruji's love for his country was as intense as his love for God. In his poems, he has described Bharat Mata as an embodiment of all that was noble and beautiful in life. India's slavery deeply hurt Sane Guruji. In one of his poems, he expressed his grief over the state of the motherland and said, "How can I sing a song, so long as my life was pitiable and full of shame owing to slavery?"

“हे जीवन लजिरवाणे
गाऊ मी कसले गाणे?”

Sane Guruji had completely identified himself with his motherland and expressed his determination to fight for her liberation. In some poems, he drew a picture of the glorious future of India. His famous poem

“बलसागर भारत होवो”

was on the lips of youths in the days of freedom struggle and even after. Sane Guruji had, in this poem while expressing his resolve for serving his motherland in every possible way, had also expressed the hope that Bharat in future, would be powerful and would add to the grace of the world. The idea that sacrificing his life at the altar of liberty would give him the highest joy of life, recurred in many poems. Some of the Poems were songs full of patriotic fervour. The song “उठू दे, देश चेदू दे”, ‘Let my country arise, let my country catch fire’, was an appeal to youths to join the freedom struggle, pass through the ordeal of extreme suffering of every kind, create a new nation, which is free from bondage, a nation standing with head erect, a nation which would destroy the mite of the foe who had plundered and looted her.

Some poems have a beautiful rhythm in them. Such was the poem -

भारतमाता माझी लावण्याची खाण
गाईन तिचे गान

मी
गाईन तिचे गान
करीन तिचे ध्यान
मी
करीन तिचे ध्यान

The boys and girls in school danced while singing this poem.

The best poem that Sane Guruji wrote in the patriotic vein was “स्वातंत्र्याचे आम्ही शिपाई” (We are the fighters for freedom)

In this poem Sane Guruji gave expression to the firm resolve to win freedom and also explained the social, economic and political content of freedom, in a simple and yet in a very inspiring manner. He had forcefully stated that freedom would be an opportunity to spread the light of knowledge in our country, to destroy tyranny and inequality in our society and to bring happiness to the huts of the poor and the oppressed. Owing to the directness and the simplicity of style, the poem becomes a portrayal of a vision and not a didactic statement. The reader is carried away by the fervour of Sane Guruji's patriotism, his love for his countrymen and the optimism which naturally emerged from the mood to fight against the tyrannical foreign rule.

Sane Guruji's love for nature flowed as an under-current in all his poems. Whether he was offering prayers to God or whether he was singing of the glory of his motherland, the images of nature crept in his poems in an easy and spontaneous manner. In poems such as

“मेघासम माझे जीवन”

(My life is like a cloud)

the readers realize that nature constantly hovered in Sane Guruji's mind.

Love for children was the dominant note in Sane Guruji's life. He wanted children to grow with nature. In his poem -

“हस रे माझ्या मुल”

(Laugh and be merry, My boy)

there was a beautiful blend of love for a child and love of nature. The Poem had a pleasant rhythm and was liked by all children.

Sane Guruji frankly said that he wrote poems in order to give expression to the anguish of his mind. He said, “When the agonies are intense and when the faith in God is equally intense, I do not feel like dilating over them in prose. A poem becomes a natural medium for expressing my mood and after writing it, I feel relieved.”

In India, many simple and unsophisticated people go to the temple and talk to God about their sorrows in their life. They are so much

oppressed by circumstances that the temple is the only place where they can open out their hearts before God and get some relief. Many Saint-Poets all over India had carried on such an intimate conversation with the deity they worshipped. In Maharashtra, Namdev, Janabai, Chokha Mela and some other Saints had written poems in this vein. Sane Guruji's devotional poetry belonged to this tradition. Sane Guruji's patriotic poems have to be understood in the context of the times in which he lived. From 1930 to 1946, the freedom struggle in India was at its highest pitch. Sane Guruji found great solace in serving the motherland and his patriotic poems were an expression of that mood. Sane Guruji had a poet's mind, a poet's sensibilities and yet he was not a great poet. He expressed his sentiments but he could not always arouse in others similar sentiments. I think, however, that it would not be proper to judge his poems by the canons of criticism accepted by modern critics. His poems were the sincere utterances of his mind. While reading them one realises the truth of the statement by the great Marathi writer V. S. Khandekar that 'A noble and a saintly person may not be a great artist but his sincerity and earnestness and the noble qualities of mind lift his writings to a high plane and lend a peculiar quality to them.'

Acharya Bhagwat, the great Gandhian Thinker in Maharashtra, had written a very thought-provoking preface to Sane Guruji's collection of poems- 'Patri'. Acharya Bhagwat wrote : 'In Sane Guruji's poem there were three Rasas- Bhakti Rasa, Karuna Rasa and Veer Rasa. These Poems were not written for aesthetic delight but for the ennoblement of the Poet's own mind''.



‘SHYAM’S MOTHER’ A Hymn to Mother’s Love

Sane Guruji has written “श्यामची आई”- Shyam's Mother and a sequel to it. Both these books are autobiographic narrations, describing Sane Guruji's childhood, boyhood and adolescence. The best among these autobiographical narrations is “Shyam's Mother” in which Sane Guruji has drawn an inimitable character sketch of his mother. The book is a classic in Marathi language. Sane Guruji participated in the Civil Disobedience movement in 1932, was sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment and was kept in Nasik Prison. Though he had to do rigorous work of physical labour for eight hours during the day, Sane Guruji still found time to read and write. He was deeply attached to his mother. She had moulded and shaped his character during his childhood. In prison, Sane Guruji shared his life with co-prisoners. But at night when all were asleep, he kept awake and recollected his childhood. He remembered all the spots in Palgad - his place of birth, many incidents in his childhood and above all his mother, who was to him, an incarnation of everything that was pure, simple and noble. He was overwhelmed with emotion when he remembered his mother's fond affection for him and the loving care with which she brought him up. Sometimes he became restless and then wrote down all his reminiscences of childhood, which became almost irrepressible. Sane Guruji was a very shy person and wrote only when others were asleep i.e. either after ten at night or in the early hours of the morning. He had a very facile pen and once he started writing, he never groped or faltered for proper words. He started writing this book on 9th February, 1933 and completed it on 12th February, 1933. In five days, he wrote nearly two hundred pages. As he himself wrote in the preface to the first edition, “My heart was full, nay it was overflowing and, therefore, I could give expression to all that was uppermost in my mind.” Sane Guruji was a born story-teller and he chose the same form for this autobiographical narration. He stated at the beginning,

that there was an Ashram where boys lived together. After the night-prayer the boys gathered and then Shyam told them about his childhood. Sane Guruji's name was Pandurang but he assumed the name Shyam. The moment he started speaking, the boys listened to him eagerly and after the first day, their interest in Shyam's narration was greatly aroused. The atmosphere in the Ashram was cordial and intimate. The pleasant breeze and the tinkling of the bells of a bullock-cart heard from a distance, added to the charm of the sacred atmosphere which pervaded the Ashram. And then Shyam started his narration. Every night, he would describe one incident and the narration went on for forty-two nights. Each incident had its own peculiar flavour, each was independent and still there was an organic unity in the narration. The character of Shyam's mother was the pivotal point and while portraying her character, the narration, spread over forty-two nights, emerged as a beautiful pattern with a rhythmic charm. In fact though written in prose, Shyam's mother is a poem. Acharya Atre, a great writer in Marathi described "Shyam's Mother" as "मातृप्रेमाचे महान्मंगल स्तोत्र"—A sacred hymn describing the love of a mother, a poem which is unique and also universal in appeal."

There is no artifice whatever, about the narration of 'Shyam's Mother'. One episode after another is told by Shyam in such a natural manner, and with such simplicity that the reader forgets himself and is carried along the flow of the narration. Just as one petal after another opens out and the flower blooms, in every chapter, a new facet of the love of a mother is revealed. In the end, the personality of Shyam's Mother captivates the reader by the fragrance and beauty of her character. In Sane Guruji's mind, whatever was noble was associated with the concept of the mother. He, therefore, wrote in the preface, "In jail, my mind was always preoccupied with the thought about the Mother-Goddess who created the world, Bharat Mata in whose lap we Indians are brought up, and my mother, who not merely gave me birth, but also shaped my life." His mind was thus a 'Triveni Sangam'-- a confluence of three sacred streams-- the stream of love of the Mother Goddess, the creator of the universe, the stream of love for the Motherland and the stream of love for his mother. At Allahabad, where the Ganga and the Jamuna meet, the Saraswati is also present though she cannot be seen. In "Shyam's Mother", the presence of the Goddess Saraswati is felt in every line that Sane Guruji wrote.

When Sane Guruji's friends asked him as to how he was so pure in heart, so modest and how he could love all alike, Sane Guruji told

them, "I am in no way different from you. I have my faults and my failings which are not noticed by you because of your greatness." His friends disagreed with him and said, "You atleast tell us how you have become what you are." Sane Guruji said, "I am not that important; however the source of everything that is good in me is my mother. The source is always pure, though the stream, which originates from that source and runs ahead, may be full of mud. At Gangotri, the small stream of water is clear like a crystal, though the stream of the Ganga is defiled and polluted later on. My mother was like Gangotri, though I am not like the Ganges. Jagannath Pandit has written, "Ganga Lahari", a poem in praise of the river Ganga. I shall sing the hymn of Gangotri. I shall sing the hymn to my mother." And thus he started telling his friends the story of his childhood, which in fact is a hymn to motherhood.

"Shyam's Mother" is a tale, full of pathos. Shyam was born in a family, which at one time was rich. His ancestors were "Khots"-landlords. Shyam has mentioned that the prosperity of the Khots was the result of exploitation; hence he remarked, "There was a mango-grove, many coconut trees and betel-nut trees; also rich paddy-farms. However, all this riches was, in fact, the result of the exploitation of the sons of the soil. The farmers toiled and the khots prospered !" The Sanes enjoyed such prosperity so long as they were a joint family. But later on, there were divisions and Sadashivrao, Shyam's father got only a small piece of land which was not adequate even to support his own family. Shyam's Mother, who came from a well-to-do family, who after marriage had experienced the prosperity of the joint family, accepted the change in the circumstances with dignity. She courageously faced all the difficulties born out of poverty. She was deeply hurt when they had to leave their ancestral home and had to live almost in a wretched cottage. She was even more deeply grieved when her husband was insulted. Her main concern of life was her children. She was determined to inculcate the sense of self-respect in her sons and make them virtuous. Shyam was the apple of her eye, but she never spoilt him. In one incident after another, Shyam described how she was harsh while bringing him up and yet tears rushed from her eyes afterwards for her act of harshness- the act which she regarded as necessary in order to shape his character, but which at the same time caused pain to her loving heart. When Shyam ran away from the well because he was afraid to jump into the water, his mother caned him ruthlessly and said, "You must not run away like a coward; you must learn to swim."

Shyam at last got over his fears and learnt to swim with the help of his cousin - Shyam has described how his mother held him to bosom and softly moved her fingers over the red marks on Shyam's back - a result of her caning. With a choked voice she said, "Shyam I beat you because I don't want anyone to laugh at my Shyam." Shyam, like all children of his age, was sometimes very haughty, sometimes very naughty and on some occasions a victim to many temptations. His mother scolded, coaxed him, but her affection was always evident. Young Shyam was touched by his mother's intense love for him and slowly imbibed in himself all that she taught him. Shyam's mother thus persuaded him to act as she wanted him to, and made him realize that there was great joy in helping others and above all in loving them. Shyam has described how sometimes he quarrelled with his brothers and yet, how owing to his mother he set aside his comforts in order to make them happy. In this narration Shyam has described how, while passing through great sufferings his mother always was humane, helped her maid servant in her own simple and humble way and showered all affection on her. There are many incidents full of pathos but the character of Shyam's Mother never becomes pathetic. She accepted everything with a smile on her lips and thus emerges as a 'perfect woman, nobly planned', who tried to guard the interest of the family and did everything in order to bring her children up in such a manner that their hands would grow strong, their intellect would become sharp and above all they would have a noble and generous heart. She suffered much, many times was almost broken, but never stooped low. The money-lender from whom Shyam's father had taken debt, used obnoxious language - "Sell your house or sell your wife; but give me back my money." Shyam's mother could not swallow the insult and said, "Get out of my house. We are poor, but we have not sold our character." In the narration Shyam has described the pangs of poverty and also the determined efforts of his mother to keep the flame of virtue burning in her own heart and in the hearts of her children. Shyam who witnessed his mother's intense faith in God and her capacity to face calamities, developed further in himself the qualities of heart which he had inherited from her mother.

Shyam went to Dapoli for his schooling. He narrated the episode in which his father walked for more than twelve miles just to give him the only simple sweet the poor man could give to his son and to his friends. Shyam also apologetically narrated how he felt embarrassed owing to the rustic appearance of his father. Shyam could not pay his

fees, had to leave the high-school at Dapoli and had to go to a far off place Aundh where he could get free education. But owing to the epidemic of plague, he had to come back. After staying for a few days, he left for Pune, where he got some support from his friends. Shyam's mother showered affection on Shyam when he was at home and gave him the only woolen blanket the family had. She was always anxious about Shyam's well being. All her sufferings at last affected her health. She grew very weak. She wanted to meet Shyam before her death but that was not to be. Shyam was struggling for his education and his mother was struggling for the survival of her family. Shyam appeared for the matriculation examination. He was also very eager to meet his mother. He got down from the boat at Harnaye harbour and while he was walking towards Dapoli, he met his mother's sister. She wept bitterly and told Shyam that his mother was no more. Shyam was overwhelmed with grief and almost broke down. He went to Palgad and when he met his father and his brothers and could participate in the last rites performed after his mother's death, his heart was a little relieved. He fondly remembered his mother who faced life stoically and realized that it was his duty to face life courageously, to act as she wanted him to; and above all, to shower affection on all, as she did in her simple life nearly crushed by suffering and yet full of dignity.

And thus ended Shyam's hymn to mother-hood.

Sane Guruji was a great story teller and knew how to captivate the audience. The autobiographic narration in 'श्यामची आई' never became dull. The characters of both Shyam and his mother emerged from the incidents which came in quick succession. There was a perfect blend of the characters and the simple and straight-forward plot in which incidents were artistically woven. Besides this, the creation of atmosphere was a great merit of this book. Sane Guruji, through the description of details, drew an inimitable picture of a typical Bramhin family in Konkan. There were references to food - rice specially cooked for children. Papad, Metkoot, and different vegetables. There was the description of the games which boys and girls played, and the expression of exuberance when they danced with joy in the first shower of the monsoon.

The character of Shyam's father was representative of the poor Bramhin in Konkan, who, even though poor, went to the Court and ruined himself. The character of the old woman, the grand-mother who was a devotee of God Ganpati and who worshipped him with 'Durvas' - blades of grass of a peculiar variety, had been portrayed

effectively with only a few strokes of pen. The petty quarrels in the family and the reconciliation, the dark cloud of poverty which destroyed the joy of living and yet the efforts of the people to snatch a few moments of happiness in the religious festival - all this was depicted by Sane Guruji in a very touching manner.

Sane Guruji was a great lover of Nature and conveyed through his description, the scenic beauty of a typical village in Konkan. The changing moods of Nature, the down-pouring rains, the beautiful Sunset when the Sun dipped into the sea, the stars which twinkled in the clear blue sky, the rivulets which sometimes made a lapping sound, sometimes almost sang owing to the rhythmic movement of water and sometimes roared when they jumped from the mountain into the valley - all these were described by Sane Guruji in a picturesque manner. He conveyed the sounds made by the chirping crows and the sparrows, the humming of the cow and the solicitous sounds made by the cunning cat and the loud barking of the dogs. An eminent literary critic has described 'श्यामची आई' as the first regional novel in Marathi. Sane Guruji portrayed Nature, not as a setting but as a character in the narrative, as real as men and women portrayed by him. The character sketch of his father is written in a very skillful manner. He was a peculiar combination of kindness and harshness. Owing to poverty and family worries, he was sometimes bitter, but he was an affectionate father who tried to do his humble bit for his children. The narration is thus a realistic picture of life, of happiness and of grief, quarrels and the cordial relationships, the pettiness and also some moments of generosity, laughter and tears. All this is beautifully woven around the central character of Shyam's mother. Acharya Atre, the great writer, made a film, "Shyamchi Aai" based on this book and the film earned an All India Award. Acharya Atre after accepting the All India Golden Award, said, "I am happy, I could present at least a part of the beauty of the great classic in Marathi literature, written by Sane Guruji."

Shyam Part I and II did not at all rise to the heights reached by "श्यामची आई". The autobiographical narration of Shyam describing his school days was realistic. But when Shyam wrote about his sufferings, he was rather reticent, even though his sufferings were acute and he had to go without food on many days. The intense idealism of Shyam, his capacity for suffering and his determined effort to carry on his studies and to enrich his mind through books - all these have been communicated through the narration. But the emotional appeal of "श्यामची आई" is lacking in these books. In Shyam - Part I

and II as the narration proceeds, the readers are sorry for Shyam's suffering, sympathise with him, adore *him* for his idealism. But such sufferings fall to the lot of many poor students. In “श्यामची आई”, Sane Guruni had depicted something unique, something which reached the heights of poetry. The other books though moving in some parts, did not fascinate the reader in the manner in which Sane Guruji involved them in “श्यामची आई”.

After reading “श्यामची आई”, the readers recollect the affection of their own mother and wish that they should re-live their childhood. Our minds are sweeter and saner after reading “Shyam's Mother.”



4

SWEET STORIES AND OTHER BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

All people love children but only a few of us can take interest in them for a long time. Some of us play with children for some time. Some can tell them stories but generally the interests of the grown up people are different from those of children. Sane Guruji was quite different from us. He loved children as fine creations of God and beautiful manifestations of Nature. In one of his talks he said, "When the scorching heat of the Sun becomes oppressive we all yearn for a pleasant breeze. When my mind is scorched by various experiences in daily life, I see children and their very existence, like a pleasant breeze, soothes my burning mind. Owing to the selfishness and greed in the life of grown-up people, I feel as if I am suffocated by some nasty smell. At such a moment if there are children around me, I feel that I am in a garden and the fragrance of the flowers there drives away the nauseating smell around me. In life many a time I feel as if I am walking through a dreary desert. The vast stretch of the desert overpowers me with depression. At such a moment, I see a child and I feel that I have seen a rivulet in the desert. Water from that stream is delicious, and its very touch gives an exhilarating sensation to my parched lips. I meet another child and I feel that I have reached an oasis in the desert. I meet a group of children dancing merrily and shouting with joy. I realize that the vast stretch of the desert has ended and I am surrounded by green earth where the crops are wafted by the wind. The children shout with joy and I feel that I am listening to the twittering of many small birds at dawn. Children are the works of art created by God. They have the beautiful forms of sculptures, the delightful colours in paintings. Their small talk is like music. I am an humble devotee of God. I am eager to go very near to God. I have realized that I can establish an intimate relationship with God only if I can amuse children and give them some joy by telling them stories."

Wherever Sane Guruji went, he was surrounded by children. Those

were the days when children flocked to the ground where Seva Dal workers taught children to play and to sing. Boys and girls enjoyed the games, enthusiastically sang the songs in a chorus. When Sane Guruji went to these playgrounds, he was overjoyed when he saw the boys and girls playing and shouting. He would watch them quietly from a distance, asked the group leader of that branch of Seva Dal not to disturb the children. When the games would be over, the boys and girls gathered round Sane Guruji and shouted 'Guruji, tell us a story.' The group-leader would blow the whistle, and harshly said 'silence'; but the children would go on shouting. Sane Guruji smiled, raised his finger and there was calm in a moment - Sane Guruji, in a soft, low voice would say, 'I have come only for that'. And then he would start telling a story. Sometimes it would be an adaptation of some novel, he had read long ago, but which he distinctly remembered even after many years. Some times the story would be about a person, who had left an indelible impression on Sane Guruji's mind. There are many collections of such stories narrated by Sane Guruji. Ten of these collections form one group and they are called 'गोड गोष्टी' -- 'Sweet Stories'. Sane Guruji with his characteristic humility remarked, "The stories by themselves may not be sweet. They have become sweet owing to the sweet children to whom I told them."

Sane Guruji was a prolific reader in his student days. He had also a very rare retentive memory. He liked the novels of Mary Corellie and of George Eliot. He was deeply moved by the novels and stories written by Leo Tolstoy, the great Russian writer. When he read Victor Hugo's 'La Misarable' for some days he thought of nothing else. Sane Guruji had read the novels of Thomas Hardy. He felt that there was a remarkable resemblance between the shepherds and farmers of the Wessex District, described by Hardy and the poor farmers of India whose life entirely depended upon the monsoon. Sane Guruji thought that there was a great similarity between the rustic characters in Hardy's novels and the rustic people he met in rural area in Maharashtra, because both were at the mercy of fate, and both accepted the sufferings caused by the whims of nature, in a stoic manner. Sane Guruji read almost all the novels of Hardy, where the cloud of doom was always hanging over the lives of the people, and where owing to the cruel destiny the lives of heroes and heroines ended in great sorrow and suffering. Sane Guruji once told his young friends : "When I like an author like Hardy or Tolstoy, I never stop till I have read all books by him." Sane Guruji was a very sensitive

reader and all the books he liked, found a place in his subconscious mind. When Sane Guruji started participating in freedom struggle, his life was very hectic. He moved from one village to another, addressed meetings, talked to groups of young men, particularly to students. When he lived with the simple peasants in Khandesh, he almost became a member of their family and found great joy in telling stories to the children of the household and around. Sane Guruji once said, "Sometimes my mind was blank, and yet the moment when the boys and the girls sat around me eager to listen, I remembered the plot of some book I had read long back. Thus one day I remembered the book, 'Meek Heritage', written by some author from Finland and when I started my narration, I distinctly remembered everything in that book. Sometimes he remembered the plot only partially. Some-times in order to make the story interesting for children around him, only the skeleton of the original plot remained and the story conformed to the atmosphere in India. Sane Guruji later on wrote down these stories which he had narrated and which the children had enjoyed. He had very little leisure to write. He could not get the books which he wanted to summarise and adapt. He wrote these stories sometimes after midnight, some-times even before dawn. On some occasions he would write while he was waiting for a train. And yet he could make an excellent adaptation of Marie Correlli's novel, "The Treasure of Heaven", which he called in Marathi "स्वर्गीय ठेका". The adaptation of another novel "The Lamp-Lighter" is also delightful. The title of this book in Marathi is "सिनी". In some of these Marathi renderings, he digressed from the original plot, changed some situations, but conscientiously conveyed the spirit of the original book. This is seen in his book "दुईवी" which was a free rendering of Hardy's novel "Mayor of Casterbridge". When he read Alexander Duma's "Black Tulip", he wrote a novelette "फुलंचा प्रयोग"— "An experiment with flowers". This book excellently conveys beauty of the original book. Sane Guruji's brilliant adaptation of Charles Kingsley's famous novel, "The Cloister and the Hearth" — "घली की पत्नी" conveys all the essence of the original novel. Sane Guruji was profoundly, impressed by George Eliot's "Silas Marner" and told the story of the book to the Satyagrahi - prisoners in Dhule jail. Later on he wrote the story in Marathi - with the title "मनुबाबा", Tolstoy's novel "Resurrection" deeply moved Sane Guruji. He told the story of the novel to a group of villagers and they were also moved. Sane Guruji later on wrote a novelette "नवजीवन". In the VIth Part of the Series "Sweet Stories",

Sane Guruji wrote the story of Sohrab and Rustum. The situation, in which the father who was in exile in a far off land, did not recognise his brave son and killed him in a duel, is very dramatic and has a tragic end. Sane Guruji has drawn very realistic character - sketches of the father and the son and communicated the irony of fate in the story in a very moving manner. In another book, 'दुःखी' (miserable) there is a fine adaptation of Victor Hugo's 'Le Miserable'.

Sane Guruji read a poem 'Dora' and liked it very much. He said, "I felt that a rendering of the poem in Marathi, in verse would not convey the beauty of the original poem. I, therefore, decided to expand the central idea and the result is my story "Jai".

Sane Guruji read a number of books about the life in China. In one of these books, he read a brief summary of a play written by a Chinese dramatist. He decided to develop the central idea of the play through a story. Sane Guruji told his friend, 'When I started writing this story, the central character of the heroine almost took the pen out of my hand and started writing the story herself. The result was the short novel - "Karuna Devi", which forms VIIIth part of "Sweet Stories".

When Sane Guruji was in Trichanapalli Prison in Tamilnadu, he learnt Tamil. A Tamilian Satyagrahi became a close friend of Sane Guruji. He told his friend from Maharashtra many stories which were liked by people in Tamilnadu. Sane Guruji liked one of the Tamil stories immensely. He decided to write a story in Marathi, based on the plot of that Tamil story. The result was a novelette "चित्रा नि चारु".

Sane Guruji had an aptitude for learning Indian languages. He learnt Bengali and mastered the language by reading many books in Bengali. He came across a collection of Bengali folk tales, read it and liked it very much. After ten years he narrated six of these Bengali folk-tales and later on wrote them. These six-stories are included in the first part of "Sweet Stories".

The Ten Parts of "Sweet Stories" and also certain other collections such as "Anmol Goshti" Invaluable Stories and 'Vishram' endeared Sane Guruji to children all over Maharashtra, Thousands of copies of these story-books have been sold and a new edition of these collections of stories, is published almost every year.

Sane Guruji's love for children resembled that of a mother, who while doing her utmost for children, was always vigilant that they would never get spoilt. Sane Guruji remarked that children should be tended like flowers, so that when they grow, all their qualities should blossom. In his letters to his niece Sudha he described to her the joy

of reading books, the pleasure in helping those who needed help and the happiness in serving the motherland.

Sane Guruji knew that sermonizing was not the way by which the virtue of patriotism would be inculcated in the minds of children. He, therefore, decided to write books on the lives of the great leaders and patriots in India, in such a manner that the boys and girls after reading these brief biographies would be inspired to follow in to the footsteps of those men. When Sane was in the Senior B.A. Class, he wrote the biography of the great liberal leader and patriot Gopal Krishna Gokhale at the time of his tenth death-anniversary and the book was published in 1926. The book was highly appreciated, and the readers were surprised that this biography, which was a scholarly work and which was also written in a pleasant style, was written by a young student who was on the threshold of graduation. Sane had highest regard for Gokhale's meritorious services to India and was particularly moved by Gokhale's noble idea of starting The Servants of India Society - a Society of young idealists who would dedicate their lives to the motherland.

Afterwards when Sane became a teacher he wrote the biography of Chittaranjan Das, the great Bengali Leader, who was a great parliamentarian and also a towering personality among the galaxy of the leaders of India's freedom struggle, in the Gandhian era. Sane Guruji while describing the events in the life of C. R. Das showed that brilliant intellect and intense idealism were the main features of his personality, and owing to his sacrifice C. R. Das became the fountain of inspiration to the youths in Bengal.

Most of the books that Sane Guruji wrote were first narrated as stories to the boys and girls in Seva Dal. For every occasion, which was celebrated in Maharashtra, Sane Guruji had an appropriate story to tell. Thus on 1st August, i.e. the on the death anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak, he gave a graphic account of the Life of Lokmanya Tilak. On Gandhi Jayanti, he described some facets of Gandhiji's Life, by telling a number of anecdotes. On the birth-anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, he described the valour, the patriotism and the achievements of Shivaji Maharaj who is a perennial source of inspiration to youths. Later on, whenever, Sane Guruji found some time, he wrote down whatever he had narrated. Sane Guruji had a rare retentive memory and a facile pen. His style was simple and straightforward. His earnestness and sincerity, pervaded his writings and as a result boys and girls, who read what he had written for them, were

emotionally involved. When Sane Guruji spoke, the boys and the girls listened to him with rapt attention. When he wrote, he had the readers before his mind's eye and he wrote as if he spoke to them. The booklets, therefore, became very appealing. Thus Sane Guruji wrote booklets "Lokmanya Tilak", and "Shri Shivraj". He wrote six booklets narrating different anecdotes about Gandhiji. The series "बापूजींच्या गोड गोष्टी"— "Sweet Tales about Gandhiji" is still very popular and has run in eight editions.

Sane Guruji thought that great men in India were like peaks of Himalayas and, therefore, in one of his books he wrote 22 fine pen-pictures of eminent political leaders like Dadabhai Nowrojee, Subhashchandra Bose, Lala Lajpatrai and Lokmanya Tilak, of eminent revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh the great martyr, Jatindranath Das, of great social reformers like Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar and Jyotiba Phule, and of the Saintly leaders like Vivekanand and Aurobindo Ghosh. The title of this book is "हिमालयाची शिखरे"— "Peaks of the Himalayas".

Sane Guruji wanted our Society to change on all fronts and expected people to learn at least the three 'R's -- reading, (W)riting and (A)rithmetic. He was an ardent advocate of literacy and wherever he went, he asked the Seva Dal Volunteers to start literacy classes. In order to persuade the illiterate farmers in Khandesh and particularly women to join the literacy classes, Sane Guruji, wherever, he went, told simple and interesting stories bringing out the advantage of becoming literate. His appeal was very effective. The collection of these stories -- "साक्षरतेच्या कथा" -- "Tales of Literacy" enthused the boys and girls in the high schools to teach the alphabets to the villagers. Sane Guruji's call 'each one, teach one', conveyed through his stories, reached the people, and there were literacy classes in over hundred villages in Khandesh.

In India's freedom-struggle, the great leaders, while making people conscious of their duty to the motherland, also taught them to keep away from vices. Lokamanya Tilak and later on, Mahatma Gandhi, vigorously campaigned against the vice of drinking and asked people, particularly women to do picketting at the liquor-shops. Sane Guruji always asked people to be virtuous. He said, "We all want freedom. But we must first deserve it and then desire. We shall deserve freedom only after all liquor shops are closed, and all people would give up the habit of drinking." Sane Guruji did not give lectures about prohibition but wherever he went he told stories about the evils of drinking. The

simple women working in the fields, after listening to his stories, told Sane Guruji that in many families, the vice of drinking had spoilt men who beat their wives and children and ruined the family. Sane Guruji asked the women to become bold and drive away the husband if he would be drunk. The stories -- “दारुबंदीच्या कथा” -- “Tales of Prohibition”, were written by Sane Guruji in order to appeal to the people to give up drinking. They were highly appreciated in villagers and influenced many people.

Sane Guruji in one of his booklets -- “Bharatiya Nari”, wrote about the women in Vedic times and about the eminent women in the middle-ages when the saints played an important part in India's life. He also wrote about the women in modern India. Sane Guruji's book -- “माझी दैवते” -- “My Deities”, though small is very beautiful. Sane Guruji loved and worshipped Nature, and in the first three chapters, he wrote in a lyrical manner about Sky, Light and Water. These chapters are almost poems written in prose. In the next three chapters Sane Guruji has described the human deities -- The Sages in ancient times, and the two mythological characters -- Dhruva and Pralhad. Sane Guruji expected children to emulate the examples of Dhruva and Pralhad. “Shabari” is another beautiful story written by Sane Guruji. Here the original story from Ramayana has been rewritten by Sane Guruji in such a manner that the readers feel the touch of the atmosphere in Dandakaranya in ancient times. Sane Guruji has drawn an imitable character-sketch of Shabari a maiden born in the family of a Bhil Prince and brought up in the ‘ashram’ of Matang Rishi. She became a Tapaswini, gave up all the pleasures of life and devoted her life to God. As she was a daughter of the mother earth, she had an intimate relationship with Nature and found tongues in trees, books in running brooks and sermons in stones. How Shabari was eagerly waiting for the arrival of Ram, how she wanted to give choicest fruits to Ram and how in an innocent manner she tasted the Ber fruits before offering them to Ram -- all this had been described by Sane Guruji in such a manner that the reader could never forget Shabari, the daughter of the forest. The extra-ordinary manner in which Shabari expressed her devotion to Ram and her innocent nature have been depicted by Sane Guruji in a touching way.

The collections of stories -- “अमोल गोष्टी” -- “Amol Goshti” and “सुंदर कथा” -- “Beautiful Stories” also make very pleasant reading. Equally fine is another collection of stories -- “मुलंसाठी फुले” -- “Flowers for Children”. These stories are realistic and depict the virtues of

common men, women and children. Through these stories, Sane Guruji wanted boys and girls to understand that happiness is possible even when one is poor and that one gets real joy only when one helps others and shares the sorrow of others.

Sane Guruji had great love for those who lived by the sweat of their brow. He preferred the simple, unsophisticated villagers to educated people in cities. He did not like rich people at all. He impressed upon the boys and girls that there was dignity in physical labour, by drawing fine pen-pictures of men and women who sweated and toiled in fields and factories. A collection of thirteen such pen-pictures written by Sane Guruji reveals his sympathy for the poor and his affinity with farmers and labourers. The title of this collection of pen-pictures is “श्रमणारी लक्ष्मी”- “Laxmi who Toils”. Through these pen-pictures Sane Guruji made the children understand that Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth, emerged from hard work of labour and not from money.

The two novelettes of Sane Guruji -- “आपण सारे भाऊ भाऊ”- “All of us are Brothers” and “नवा प्रयोग”- “A Novel Experiment” are also very delightful. In both these novelettes, Sane Guruji has indicated the direction in which our society must start changing. Instead of writing essays on Liberty, Fraternity and Equality, Sane Guruji has described in these books, life in villages and the experiments made by the idealist youths. He has shown how the mind of the people must be emancipated from the clutches of political slavery and also from the bonds of evil traditional customs. He has shown how to create a sense of brotherhood amongst all the people and make them realise the noble ideal of equality. The situations described by Sane Guruji were realistic and the character-sketches which he had drawn were life-like. Sane Guruji described how the youths fired by idealism changed the society around them. Sane Guruji above all, showed that when their dreams became a reality, the youths had a sense of fulfilment. Sane Guruji hoped that when boys and girls would read these stories of idealistic endeavour, they would be inspired to follow that path.

It is said that sometimes the significant qualities of a writer are revealed as much through some minor works as through his master-pieces. Sane Guruji has written a booklet ‘Kavale’ (Crows). It was one of his minor books and yet it brought out Sane Guruji's qualities as a writer. The book begins with a remark, ‘In my childhood I very much liked the crow.’ Sane Guruji further described a crow in a picturesque manner. His appreciation of beauty in nature was not conventional. He described, how when he threw a piece of bread regularly to a crow, the

bird developed an attachment to him. The writer further remarked : "What a pleasure it is to watch crows, sparrows, ants, cats and many other simple creatures in Nature. I listen to the crowing of crow, the chirping and twittering of other birds and after a long association and observation, I have learnt their language. They express their joy and their sorrow, their love and their anger, their hatred and their gratitude, in peculiar ways. You have to listen to them, observe them and you can easily understand their mood."

Sane Guruji then described his imaginary conversation with a crow. The crow complained that man had unnecessarily maligned crows all these years and, therefore, the crows who wanted to be friendly with man were thinking of revolting against him. There then followed a description of a conference of crows, in which some crows described the good work done by crows in removing dirt and their charitable attitude in bringing up the young ones of the Kokila. Some crows expressed anger, but at last the consensus was they should approach God and seek his advice. When the crows approached Heaven, they saw that many men were knocking at the gate of Heaven for entrance, but were turned away for all their misdeeds, their sins, their cruelty, selfishness and their greed. When the crows saw all the vices of man, they were shocked, But at long last they decided that they would never go against the wishes of God, and carried on the work entrusted to them, continuing to live as God wanted them to live. The elder crow said, "Man, after all, is our brother. Let us hope, he would improve. We need not quarrel with him. We need not revolt against him. We should obey God, who would one day embrace us all to his bosom."

The book was written mainly for boys and girls, but had a message also for the grown-up people. Sane Guruji in a pleasant artistic manner, told of the joy he derived from his friendship with a crow. He did not preach but in a suggestive manner, brought out the contrast between the crooked nature of man and the simplicity of a crow. Though a small book, 'कावळे' was highly appreciated both by children and the adult readers.

Sane Guruji wrote four plays, three of which were intended to be staged in the high schools, particularly in the rural area. He also translated Blue Bird by Meterlink. Sane Guruji was essentially a storyteller and the plays he wrote were stories in the form of a dialogue. The form of the drama, did not suit his temperament.



5

LETTERS TO SUDHA

Sane Guruji had a great affection for his niece Sudha. When she was about eight years old Sane Guruji started writing letters to her. He was always travelling and was absorbed in work throughout the day. He had to write for newspapers. He also wrote books. In spite of all this he found time to write long letters to Sudha, who used to say, "Anna (Sane Guruji was called 'Anna' by the members of his family) meets me through his letters." She carefully kept these letters and later on three collections of these letters have been published under the title 'सुंदर पत्रे'— 'Beautiful Letters'. Sane Guruji, who was full of humility would never say that his writings were beautiful. But his niece Sudha, and her father Appa always said that they were beautiful letters and Sane Guruji's friends therefore decided to publish them under that title. Even the fastidious reader would say that the letters were beautiful. In private life, Sane Guruji did not speak much. He hardly spoke anything to elders. Through these letters, however, he spoke at length to Sudha. The intimate tone and the simplicity lent a rare charm to these letters. Sane Guruji through these letters told Sudha about many aspects of life in a very pleasant manner. In all these letters, different moods of Nature have been described by Sane Guruji in such a way, that Sudha must have felt the exhilarating touch of Nature. He described rivulets in Konkan, sometimes making a musical sound while flowing and during the monsoon almost roaring when their gushing water crossed the dales and vales. He described the Sunset near the sea in a picturesque manner and also the dark clouds which sometimes gathered suddenly and came down in a brisk shower. He described the different trees, the wild flowers, which were born to blush unseen and yet spread their fragrance even though there was none around to enjoy it. Sane Guruji's minute and appreciative observation of different trees was revealed through the description of these trees in their different moods -- trees bearing delicate leaves in spring, trees blooming with

freshness after the rainy season, the trees looking sad when leaves had fallen during the Shishir Ritu. Sane Guruji had spent his childhood in Konkan and the scenic beauty of Konkan which always hovered in his mind, had been described by him in his letters to Sudha in such a manner that Konkan became dear to her.

Sane Guruji very much liked the simple and unsophisticated farmers of Khandesh. In his letters, with a few strokes of his powerful pen he had drawn various pictures of their life. He described the farmers -- men and women, jubilant during the harvesting season, and deeply depressed if owing to the failure of the monsoon, the crops had dried up. He described how in spite of poverty, men, women and children looked happy, and enjoyed a meal of coarse bread, onion and chillies. He described the women working in the fields reaping and singing a chorus song. Sane Guruji wrote in his letters to Sudha about the different festivals and told her that people could suffer the drudgery of their life only because they could snatch a few moments of happiness during those simple celebrations of the holy days spread over the year. Sane Guruji in one of his letters, described beautifully the attachment of the farmer and his family to his cattle and described how the farmers regarded 'Pola' as a sacred day when they worshipped the bullocks and fed them with 'Puran-Poli' -- a sweet dish very popular all over Khandesh. He described how in poor families a simple dish like 'Gakar' was regarded by children and also the grown ups as a delicacy. He had drawn Sudha's attention to the contrast between the simple joy in the life of the poor people and the discontent and unhappiness in rich families. In his letters he told Sudha that mind was its own place and could make a heaven of hell and a hell of heaven.

Sane Guruji had read widely and desired that Sudha should read all the good books that he had read as a student. In his letters, therefore, there were many references to different books written for children from the Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen, to Panchatantra written by Vishnu Sharma in Sanskrit. Sane Guruji also asked Sudha to read books on science. He wrote to her that science enabled man to understand life and threw light on matters about which most of the people were completely in the dark. The references to various books on science, books about nature, and masterpieces of literature, were interspread all over the letters.

Sane Guruji adored great men and particularly great leaders of India. He had in his letters to Sudha, given fine anecdotes from the

lives of Vivekanand, Lokmanya Tilak, Gandhiji, Tagore and also from the lives of Abraham Lincoln, Edison, Goethe and Tolstoy. Sane Guruji had written to Sudha about the great travellers of the world. He did not preach anything but described the joy in seeing the far off places, in such a manner that it would create in Sudha's mind a craving for visiting those places.

The letters of Sane Guruji revealed his pleasant personality. The letters give glimpses of his love for books, love for simple men and women, admiration for great men, his attachment to Nature, his devotion to God and his craving for a life of sacrifice and suffering. The letters were like personal essays. In every letter, the reader met Sane Guruji, an ardent idealist, a scholar, a saint and a very sensitive person with poetic qualities of mind and also a person who had a delicate sense of humour. 'Sundar Patre', are exquisite and Maha Mahopadhyaya Potdar, the great scholar and Historian remarked, "Sane Guruji has written these letters not only to Sudha but to all boys and girls from the age of eight to fifteen. These books must be in every school library and the parents should give 'Sundar Patre' to their children. These letters, like the stories told by Sane Guruji would give children immense joy and indirectly teach them to appreciate the beauty and greatness in life."

N. G. Goray an eminent writer and socialist thinker, has written a preface to the first part of 'Sundar Patre'. In that preface, while addressing Sudha, Sane Guruji's niece, he wrote : "The letters which Anna wrote to you are unique. No one has written such letters before and no one shall ever write such letters. Just as we can see all the movements of a fish moving in a jar of glass, while reading these letters one can see Anna's mind and his emotions. His mind has the vastness of the sky, the delicate nature of shirish flower, and is juicy like a grape. These letters are a reflection of Anna's mind which has the generosity of Mother Earth. His mind is as full of light as lightening and is as holy as the Ganges. The letters which he has written to you are treasure houses full of gems collected by his mind and stored in his memory. While reading his letters, I get the pleasant feeling of being drenched in the shower of rains in Shravan."

Another collection 'Shyamchi Patre' -- Letters of Shyam was quite different from 'Sundar Patre'. These letters were written by Sane Guruji to his nephew Vasant, who was studying in a College. Sane Guruji wanted to influence his mind, persuade him to take interest in the problems of our society. It was Sane Guruji's intention to enthuse

and inspire him to participate in the freedom struggle. Some of the letters would appear topical today. However, when they are read together, one gets an idea of the different currents and cross-currents in India's political life at that time. These letters of Sane Guruji reveal the idealistic fervour in his mind and throw light on the political atmosphere which was surcharged because a nation-wide struggle for freedom was almost on the horizon. In these letters Sane Guruji had stated his political views frankly and emphatically. These letters had not the charm of the letters which Sane Guruji wrote to Sudha, his niece who was not even in her teens. After all Vasant, to whom these letters were addressed was an adult. Vasant sent replies to the letters he received from his uncle. "Shyamchi Patre" was, therefore, a political dialogue. The striking feature of these letters by Sane Guruji was that he never imposed his views on Vasant but encouraged him to think for himself. "Shyamchi Patre" was a collection of letters which were intended to stimulate the mind of a college-going student, whom Sane Guruji asked to follow a noble ideal in life.



“ASTIK” AND OTHER NOVELS

Sane Guruji translated Tolstoy's book, "What Is Art ?" However, instead of translating the book word for word, he translated the important parts of the book, sometimes expanded the original ideas and some times made observations on what Tolstoy had written. In spite of these imperfections, Sane Guruji has stated the central idea of Tolstoy's book, correctly. He was greatly influenced by Tolstoy's main thesis that art was for life and was never for its own sake. Sane Guruji called himself "an humble devotee of life". He said that, it was his earnest desire that man's life should be beautiful. What he really implied was that man's life should be based on truth and must be full of goodness. He desired that all conflicts in this world should end and that people should live in peace, love each other and sacrifice for each other. This desire was quite consistent with his saintly character. Throughout his life he made an effort to spread the message of love and brotherhood. Owing to all this, people respected and loved him. But all these noble qualities do not necessarily make a man an artist. Even those thinkers and critics who did not accept the notion 'art for art's Sake', admitted that an artist whether a poet, a painter or a musician worships beauty and worships life through the medium of beauty. Just as a sage or a saint practises penance in order to realise the ultimate truth in life, similarly an artist also practises penance-- makes 'Sadhana' while creating a work of art. Such penance consists of a constant effort to understand the intricacies of human life and also a constant effort to master the technique of art in order to communicate the image of beauty in his mind. Sane Guruji led a hectic life of political action and had no leisure to devote himself to the art of writing. As a result we find that in all his writings, he did not pay necessary attention to the form of art. The stories he wrote for children were brief and each story contained one striking incident or depicted only one facet of a character. The stories written by Sane Guruji were

mostly straight-forward narrations. He was a great story-teller and the art of communication was clearly reflected in his stories. However, when Sane Guruji wrote novels, except the novel ‘Astik’, other novels were from successful. In two of his novels, “Ramacha Shela” — “रामाचा शेला” and “Kranti” — “क्रांती” he has paid no attention whatsoever to the form of a novel. These two novels were actually long stories and not novels. The plots of these novels were not well knit. The incidents described in the narration were loosely connected with one another. Instead of depicting the complexity of human nature, Sane Guruji introduced typical characters, such as good persons and bad persons, heroes and villains. Moreover his villains were not consistant in their attitude of wickedness and there was in them a sudden change of heart and they gave up their villainy. In fact, most of the characters in Sane Guruji's novels were the mouthpieces of the writer. They acted as Sane Guruji wanted them to act and spoke the language which he used to speak. ‘Ramacha Shela’ is a melodramatic novel. While describing the unfortunate occurances in the life of a maiden, Sarala, Sane Guruji showed how she became a victim to fate and was abducted to a brothel. However, the beautiful garment (Shela) offered while worshipping Rama, exposed one of the villainous characters and brought about a suddn change of heart in another villain, who wanted to molest Sarala. The novel is sentimental and the end is quite unconvincing. The end of this novel did not emerge from the plot and was inconsistant with the character of the villain's character. The end was purely accidental and appeared to have been thrust by the writer, who wanted to show that virtue succeeded in life.

“Kranti” — “क्रांती” is a very didactic novel. Sane Guruji was distressed by the vices in society, the exploitation of the poor people and the gross injustice done to women. He wanted the workers to unite in order to fight against injustice and to create a new social order based on social and economic quality. In a novel even if the writer wants to convey a message it must be revealed through the plot and incidents. In this novel, the characters made long and dull speeches giving sermons on truth and goodness. The novel was written when there was a great political upsurge -- the ‘Quit-India’ movement in which Sane Guruji had staked everything in his life. The content of the novel had to be understood in the context of the political situation in which it was written. Young men and women, who were almost confident of winning freedom, believed that after the liberation of India from the British rule, they would be able to bring about a

revolution -- क्रांती -- in all spheres of activity. The novel 'Kranti' was an expression of this buoyant optimism of the youths of those times. The plot of the novel, however, was very loose and the characters were mere types. They were not portrayed in a realistic manner. In spite of these major defects, the novel succeeded in conveying the throb of the atmosphere which was surcharged with patriotism and which reflected the idealism both in Sane Guruji's mind and in the minds of youths around him. The novel 'Kranti' therefore appealed to adolescent boys and girls who were thrilled by the Quit India movement and who had in their minds the dream of a revolution -- Kranti.

Among other novels which Sane Guruji wrote, 'Sandhya', 'Chitrakar Ranga' and 'Digambar Rai' were woven round the central character of either the hero or the heroine. These characters were idealised portrayals. In other novels such as गोड शेवट and पुनर्जन्म the incidents interesting in themselves were not woven into a pattern. The characterization was also weak. The outstanding characteristic of these novels was the idealistic fervour shown by the main characters. Sane Guruji's purpose was to inculcate a sense of idealism in the minds of impressionable youths through these stories. All these novels appear outdated today because the society, which during the forties, had great optimism, has now changed completely. These novels had a topical significance, and could not stand the test of time.

The two novels "घडपडणारी मुले" Part I & II were rather different. The characters of idealist students were drawn by Sane Guruji in an effective manner. But the plot was not realistic. The artificial nature of situations hampers the effect produced by characters.

Among the fourteen novels written by Sane Guruji "आस्तिक" was the most outstanding. Sane Guruji wrote a story of the life of Astik Rishi, in 1933. Later on he decided to develop that story and wrote a full length novel which was published much later. When the Aryans came to Bharat, they overpowered the earlier inhabitants -- The Adivasis whom they contemptuously called Anaryas. The destruction of the Nagas by the Aryas was the bloodiest episode in which thousands of Naga were either burnt alive or killed. When some of them tried to escape, their colony was set on fire. This set in motion a chain of unfortunate incidents. Pareekshit, who was the King at Hastinapur, had contempt for the Nagas and defiled their Deities. Sane Guruji in his novel had depicted the long-drawn out clash between the Aryas and the Nagas. The aggressive attitude of the Aryas and the consequent wrath among the Nagas which sometime resulted in

revenge, had been correctly brought out. King Pareekshit's obnoxious behaviour in insulting and illtreating the Nagas aroused the wrath of a Naga Youth who sprinkled poison on the fruits given to the King and thus killed him. Janamejaya, the son of King Pareekshit, succeeded to the throne and decided to avenge the death of his father by wiping off the Nagas. In Sane Guruji's novel there were three streams, and two of these streams clashed with each other while the third stream represented by the sage Astik stood for a humanist approach. Astik Rishi tried to establish peace and harmony even when there were some unfortunate incidents, which were bound to provoke people on both sides. The self-respecting Nagas represented one stream. King Janamejaya who was instigated by Vakratund, represented the second stream which was bent on destroying the Nagas. Vakratund always spoke of the superiority of the Aryas, told King Pareekshit and later on King Janamejaya, that it was necessary to maintain the purity of the Aryas. Vakratund pleaded that King Janamejaya, in order to assert the supremacy of the Aryas, should destroy the Anaryas -- the Nagas. There was the third stream in Sane Guruji's novel, which symbolised a noble way of life.

The sage Astik showed that the hostilities between the Aryas and the Nagas were perpetuated by some persons at the top, by persons like Vakratund and King Janamejaya, but the common people wanted to live in peace. This stream of idealism, convincingly proved that human feelings transcended political enmities. This stream was represented by the Naga Youth Naganand and the Aryan maiden Vatsala and also by the Aryan Youth Kartik and the Naga maiden Krishni. Vatsala, who was almost washed off by the rushing water of a river, was rescued by Naganand who jumped into the flood and brought Vatsala back to the shore. Later on Vatsala and Naganand were attracted to each other. Krishni, the innocent Naga Maiden, fell in love with Kartik, who kept away from the strife and worked in the field. Sane Guruji had woven the two episodes of love in the plot of the novel in a very artistic manner. He showed that the bonds of love were more powerful than the hatred owing to which Aryas and Nagas were separated. King Janamejaya had almost started an all-out war and the villages which were inhabited by Nagas were surrounded by his Army. The soldiers overpowered the Naga Youths and arrested them. Vatsala, the Aryan maiden boldly said that she would accept death along with her husband Naganand. Kartik, the Aryan youth who had just married Krishni, was grieved that their love would remain

unfulfilled and all their dreams would be shattered. Sane Guruji brought out the tension in this situation through different scenes when the onslaught of Janamejaya's army was about to wipe off almost the entire Naga population. The words of Astik gave courage to Vatsala, who made a determined effort to pacify the youths on both sides and made them realize that the wise counsel given by Astik Rishi should prevail because it was in the interest of both the Nagas and the Aryas. There followed then a spirited speech by the sage Astik, who told Janamejaya, that the ancient sages among the Aryas had always ended all their prayers by the words “शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः”, which clearly showed that they stood for peace and were opposed to war and destruction. Astik exposed the hollowness in the arguments of Vakratunda, who talked of the racial superiority of the Aryas and who said that Anaryas had no place in Bharat. The sage Astik was not just a dreamer. He wanted the people to realize the noble ideals of peace and love, here and now. He was a sage who kept away from action but his words inspired others to act in the right manner and to carry on the tradition of the harmonious life in Bharat. The novel ended with the cessation of hostilities. King Janamejaya reconsidered his earlier decision of taking revenge on the Nagas, ended the siege of the Naga villages and withdrew his army. The life and teaching of Astik Rishi thus culminated in ushering in the era of peaceful co-existence among the Aryans and the Nagas. The novel finely blended the social issue with personal lives. Sane Guruji, who was in the thick of the freedom movement, knew how the Hindus and Muslims were divided and how this was likely to have disastrous consequences. He, therefore, decided to depict the disastrous results of similar conflicts which occurred in India's ancient past. He also wanted to show how, inspite of the bloodshed, Astik Rishi who stood for the noble values of life, succeeded in showing the way to a harmonious social life. By describing delicately the love episodes in the novel, Sane Guruji wanted to emphasize the fact that noble feelings always conquered the hatred generated by political conflicts. The dramatic situations in the novel gave rise to suspense and thus arrested the attention of the readers. The novel ‘Astik’ has a great social significance. V. S. Khandekar, the great Marathi novelist and Dnyanpeeth Award Winner, has written a preface to this novel. He observed that in spite of some minor defects, Sane Guruji's novel lifted the readers to the exalted plane of noble human values. Khandekar described Sane Guruji as a great humanist writer, who while describing events in the

past, made people conscious of the problems in the present and showed them the way to march towards a glorious future. The novel was received with great applause in Maharashtra. Sane Guruji, through this novel, gave expression to the craving of his heart, the craving for peace and brotherhood. When Sane Guruji read the Puranas, the character of Astik Rishi had a profound influence over his mind. He wrote this novel later because the character of Astik Rishi had captivated him and Sane Guruji felt that the message of the life of Astik Rishi should reach people. In 1946 Gandhiji went to Noakhali, to wipe the tears of the Hindus who were victims of the communal frenzy. He also made a determined effort to remove the hatred in the minds of the Muslims. At that time Sane Guruji in one of his powerful public speeches remarked, “Mahatma Gandhi was carrying on the tradition of Astik Rishi. Like Astik Rishi he was leading us to peace and harmony.” The novel ‘Astik’ was Sane Guruji’s significant contribution not merely to the Marathi novel but to Indian Literature.

The last novel of Sane Guruji - ‘Teen Mule’ (Three Children) was an excellent adaptation of Tennyson’s poem, ‘Enoch Arden’. The problem depicted in this novel was the problem of the eternal triangle of love. Madhuri the heroine was wooed by two youths Budha and Manga. She appreciated the good qualities of Budha, but loved the rash and heroic Manga and married him. The episodes in the novel were dramatic but they had not been woven into the plot artistically. Characters were depicted clearly, but Sane Guruji did not probe the depths of human nature. The novel ‘Teen Mule’ was written for adolescent readers and they liked it. The novel ‘Teen Mule’ had great potentialities. If Sane Guruji had paid enough attention to the form of the novel, ‘Teen Mule’ would have achieved the desired effect. Of the fourteen novels written by Sane Guruji, only ‘Astik’ left a permanent impression on the mind of the readers. Many other novels were given to moralising and were didactic in tone. In the novel ‘Astik’, Sane Guruji’s handling of a great theme enabled him to get over his imperfections. The novel ‘Astik’, was highly appreciated both for its exposition of an intricate social problem and its humanist appeal. In this novel there was a complete identification of the writer with the central character -- Astik Rishi. That Sane Guruji’s life and his writings were almost indivisible, is clearly reflected in this novel.



BHARATIYA SANSKRUTI

Sane Guruji who had thrown himself headlong in the struggle for freedom, had a keen interest in politics. However, he was of the opinion that people all over India were held together by cultural bonds, and not through political ideologies. Sane Guruji was a student of Literature and was conscious that literature was a great unifying force, that literature transcended the limits of time and distance. Sane Guruji had read extensively. After passing the B.A. Examination, he went to Amalner, where he joined the Institute of Philosophy - Tatvadnyan Mandir. There he read many books on philosophy and religion. He read all the writings of saints, particularly those in Maharashtra. Sane Guruji lived with common people, moved from village to village and realized that simple, unsophisticated people had intense faith in God and followed the ethical teaching of religion. Sane Guruji felt that professional scholars of philosophy and religion discussed the differences between different schools of thought, and wrote scholarly commentaries on Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagwad Gita, but did not necessarily follow the philosophic teachings of these sacred books. Common men and women, on the other hand almost instinctively understood the spirit of religion and tried to follow the moral precepts in their own humble way. Sane Guruji was uncomfortable in the company of scholars, because he felt that many of them had only understood the form of religion and did not care for the spirit of religion. He felt at home when he was with the simple people in villages, shared their joys and sorrows and was eager to enlighten them on many subjects. In informal chats with people, Sane Guruji spoke at length on Bharatiya Sanskruti -- Indian Culture. He explained the different facets of Bharatiya Sanskruti in a highly original manner. Even the most fastidious and intelligent people were impressed by his exposition of Bharatiya Sanskruti. Many of them asked Sane Guruji to write down all that he spoke. When Sane Guruji was in Nasik Prison

in 1933, he read many books on Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. He was convinced that so far as the basic teachings were concerned, there were no differences in different religions and that all religions taught people to love each other and to lead an honest life. Sane Guruji felt that ethical principles were the basis of religion and was rather distressed when the rituals predominated the lives of people, making them forget the ethical content of religion. As a result, people while worshiping God cared for the sanctity of the temple rather than that of the mind ! They observed certain rules and followed certain religious practices in a very disciplined manner, but at the same time denied the right of worship, nay, even the entrance to the temple to some of their brethren. Sane Guruji thought that such people who claimed to be very religious, actually destroyed the spirit of religion and unwisely clung to the form of religion. Sane Guruji was very unhappy over such distortions of Bharatiya Sanskruti and decided to write a book and make people understand the genuine spirit of Bharatiya Sanskruti. After his release from prison in 1934, Sane Guruji came to Pune and stayed with some students from Khandesh studying in college. Sane Guruji played the role of a mother, cooked food and fed the students. When these students went to the college, Sane Guruji thought over what he had read, meditated, contemplated and then started writing. He wrote fluently and his writing had the form of talks delivered to a group of simple men and women, who were eager to know the real nature of Bharatiya Sanskruti. When the students returned from the college, Sane Guruji again assumed the role of the mother, chatted pleasantly with these youths, laughed heartily at their jokes and mischiefs and enjoyed preparing the evening meals for them. When his young friends were asleep, Sane Guruji again resumed his writing. The stream of his ideas was never interrupted by his daily routine. In fact, the work which might have appeared a drudgery to others, satisfied the maternal instinct in Sane Guruji and stimulated his intellect. He did not require even a chair or a table, but sat down with a small desk before him and his thoughts found spontaneous and appropriate expression in words. Thus, the book 'Bharatiya Sanskruti' was written within a period of a few months.

Sane Guruji was a believer in God and when he talked to rationalist friends, he said "Life is not just logic. The common man who suffers in life, needs both solace and support. His faith in God gives him that solace and support. You must understand this. You may criticize hypocrites, you should condemn those people, who exploit the name

of God in order to serve their selfish ends. But we, common people turn to God to save us from our desires and passions. It is not enough to know what is moral and immoral. It is necessary to follow a moral way of life. For this the rules laid down by religion -- आचारधर्म -- are helpful. Those people who have shed blood in the name of religion, are to my mind enemies of religion. But those simple and devout people who go to Pandharpur on Ashadhi and Kartiki Ekadashi to have a Darshan of Vitthal are the real followers of religion. I feel happy in the company of such people because I share their faith. We ordinary people are not capable of following "ज्ञानयोग" in order to meet God. We falter in life and we are not strong enough to follow the path of "कर्मयोग". But the path of devotion, "भक्तियोग" is followed by us in a natural and earnest manner. If rationalists like you cannot understand the place of Bhakti and criticize it as a 'blind faith', you will alienate yourself from the people. Bhakti gives us strength and is also a source of great joy.' To Sane Guruji the faith of the common man in God, expressed through Bhakti, was the focal point of Bharatiya Sanskruti. However, there were many other facets on which Sane Guruji wanted to throw light because he thought that this would enable people to understand the nature of Bharatiya Sanskruti better and add enlightenment to their devout attitude. This would enable them to follow the path of Bhakti without getting superstitious, while retaining their humility. Such an understanding of Bharatiya sanskruti would make them realise that their prayer to God must not be for the fulfilment of any worldly desire but for giving them an inner strength which would enable them to face the hardships of life boldly and courageously. Thus the book 'Bharatiya Sanskruti' is not a series of lectures but an intimate conversation with the common man on topics of profound significance.

In his preface to 'Bharatiya Sanskruti' Sane Guruji, described the nature of his book in clear terms. He wrote :

"This is a book written for ordinary people by an ordinary man. There is no scholarship here, no erudition. This is not a history of Indian Culture. It is the soul of Indian culture that I have attempted to discover. I have made an effort to show the way to the inner sanctuary of Indian Culture. I have made an humble effort to throw light on the vision of Indian Culture... The thoughts embodied in this book have been expressed by me in many lectures and discourses before... I have heard many of these thoughts from lips of great men like Acharya Vinoba Bhave. What I have heard has helped to develop the feelings

latent in my heart... Indian Culture adores the heart as well as the intellect. It is a culture which seeks to combine the purity of knowledge and the generosity of feeling... Indian Culture means sympathy and compassion. It means experimentation with truth... It is dynamic and grows by accepting whatever is true, good and beautiful. Indian Culture respects the founders of all religions, of all schools of thoughts and assimilates whatever is true and just. Indian Culture means going from the finite to the infinite, from darkness to light, from differences to identity. My only longing is : May I be born again and again as a humble worshipper of this great culture which seeks to bring about a grand union, which strives to lead mankind on the road leading to blessedness.'

In the first two chapters Sane Guruji explained the concept of Advaita in terms of the experiences of every-day life. He wrote : 'Bharatiya Sanskruti resounds with the voice of Unity. In it we feel the fragrance of the one. The purpose of Advaita is to remove the sense of alienation. It dispels the darkness of ill-will. If we carry the lamp of Advaita in our hands, it will bring us happiness. When we feel that others are essentially the same as we are, that is Advaita... The sages identified themselves with the whole world, with animate and inanimate objects... The entire creation teaches us Advaita. The clouds give all their water to earth, the flowers give all their fragrance. The message of all this is that whatever exists is for every one, let everything be enjoyed together... To utter the word Advaita is to put a burning piece of charcoal on one's selfish pleasures... The more our inner life and our actions in daily life are permeated by the fragrance of Advaita, the more clearly shall we understand the spirit of Bharatiya Sanskruti.'

In the second chapter Sane Guruji mentioned the different cultural conflicts in India. He referred to the conquest of the Adivasis by the Aryans and pointed out that after the bloody clashes, the sane voice of Sage Astik was heard. He admonished King Janamejaya, who was out to destroy the Nagas. He pacified the Naga Youths who wanted to take a revenge and persuaded all to live in harmony with each other. Sane Guruji observed that Astik Rishi had the vision of unity in the midst of diversity. His vision was the manifestation of Advaita. Sane Guruji condemned those who regarded the castes and subcastes as important, because the actions of these narrow minded people resulted in the fragmentation of our society. Sane Guruji pointed out that in Hindu Society symbols were utilised to impress upon the common man, the

meaning of certain concepts; but unfortunately later on the symbols became important and the original meaning of the noble concepts was destroyed. Sane Guruji said that only after brushing aside the pettiness in our mind, we would be able to achieve unity.

In the third chapter, Sane Guruji pointed out the glory of intelligence. He said "Indian Culture rejected dogmatism. An intelligent person never accepted the absolute validity of any theory and accepted that life was a perpetual search for truth." Sane Guruji rejected the theory that Vedas were "अपौरुषेय" supra-human and pointed out that in the Gayatri mantra, the prayer was "May the Sun God stimulate our intellect." He said: "To give new thoughts and ideas to society was a great Sadhana. What could be a greater blessing than to bestow upon society the eye of thinking ? ... Unless we kindled the fire of knowledge, our impurities would not be burnt out."

The title of the fourth Chapter was: "Sages as experimenters" Sane Guruji observed: "In religion, the values of life are permanent, and the rules of behaviour are changing. They are respectively called Yama यम and Niyama नियम. Truth, love, compassion and such other things are "Yama". While rules about bathing, about wearing a sacred thread etc. are Niyama." Sane Guruji expressed regret that in Hindu religion the orthodox people emphasized Niyamas -- the rules of behaviour and neglected the unchanging value system of human life. Sane Guruji made a fervent plea for carrying on the ancient tradition of the sages -- the tradition of bold experiments which removed the injustice in society and strove for peace and justice.

The fifth chapter is "Caste, aptitude and vocation". In this chapter, Sane Guruji at the outset rejected the idea that the superiority or inferiority of a person can be decided on the basis of his birth. He criticised the hierarchical caste system and remarked that all of us were born alike and should be given all opportunities for developing our aptitudes. He interpreted the "Varna" as aptitude. In the Sixth Chapter Sane Guruji elucidated "Work, Action and Deed". He did not regard one type of work as superior to the other. He pointed out that society needed all types of services and, therefore, the stigma attached to certain jobs such as scavenging was wrong. In the concluding paragraph of this chapter Sane Guruji wrote, -- "O worshippers of Indian Culture, do not look upon any act of service as petty or mean. Do the work of your own choice. Recognise your Varna (aptitude) and act according to it. Do your chosen work in the best way you can. Look upon the living and non-living means of that work as sacred and

take good care of them. In this way, do your work competently, serve Janata-Janardan and Samaj-Purush.”

In the next chapter “Devotion and Love”, Sane Guruji first explained the idea of Moksha as liberation. He said that Moksha was not something to be attained after death. When a person loved his work, when he loved the people for whom he worked and when he worked earnestly and sincerely, he worshipped God; and through such work he got inner peace and happiness, which Sane Guruji called Moksha. He said that work done in this manner, liberated us from selfishness and greed. It enabled us to partake the joys and sorrows of others. Thus we were liberated from our petty self and identified ourselves with the Samaj-Purush. That according to Sane Guruji was Moksha. He pointed out that Kabir attained this state of liberation while working as a weaver and Gora Kumbhar reached this state of an emancipated mind while working as a potter. Sane Guruji said that a teacher who loved the job of teaching and loved his students, would attain Moksha even though he would not follow the orthodox customs in society.

Sane Guruji wrote : “Bharatiya Sanskruti tells us, “Take up some work involving service. Remain absorbed in it. Overcome your pride. Become self-less. Do not forget that through this work you are worshipping Samaj-Devata.” Thus in this chapter Sane Guruji has shown the road of service, work, Dharma and devotion.

The eighth chapter bears the title “Knowledge”. Sane Guruji explained the significance of both scientific knowledge acquired through intellect and spiritual knowledge which one got through the heart. Sane Guruji, quoted Tolstoy, who said, “Stop studying other sciences. Give priority to science of correct social behaviour and relationships.” Sane Guruji said that when we loved others and treated them with respect, we were on the path of spiritual knowledge. At the end of the chapter Sane Guruji remarked, “Bharatiya Sanskruti recognised the value of both body and spirit-- science for the body and knowledge for the Soul.”

The ninth chapter is on ‘Restraint’. The chapter begins thus :

“As we have seen, actions should be performed with the attitude of detachment, enriched by knowledge and science and warmed by heart's devotion. This however, is easier said than done. Tremendous effort, ‘Sadhana’, is required to remain engaged in such work continuously. Effort here means restraint, ‘संयम’. Without restraint our work cannot attain excellence.” Throughout this chapter Sane Guruji had given

many illustrations of restraint in personal and social life. Sane Guruji emphasized the need for restraint in social relationship. He pointed out how while taking a bath, the following श्लोक was recited :

“गंगेय यमुनेचैव गोदावरी सरस्वती
नर्मदा सिंधू कावेरी जलेऽस्मिन्
सन्निधिं कुरु। ”

He drew the attention to the fact that in the small vessel which is filled with water, we saw the presence of all major rivers in India. Sane Guruji said, that instead of thinking only of our region, we should think of the whole of India. He observed that only through exercising restraint, we could have such a broad vision.

In the tenth chapter Sane Guruji has explained the idea of Renunciation of the fruit of action. This chapter is rather heavy. However, Sane Guruji has in the end explained the concept of अदृष्ट फल – the unseen reward of one's work in a very convincing manner. He said that total renunciation might not be possible for all; but if we were sure that our efforts would bear fruit -- perhaps in the distant future, we would continue doing our work and then we would get tremendous satisfaction, even if our efforts are unsuccessful. Thus the leaders like Ranade and Gokhale who laid the foundation of the future political struggles, were satisfied even when their efforts did not succeed. They knew that through their efforts, they were paving the way for Swaraj and thus were satisfied with whatever that fell to their lot. Sane Guruji summed up his argument in the following words :

The great message of Bharatiya Sanskruti is : “Do not become proud at the time of victory. Do not despair in the hour of defeat. We have to become dispassionate witnesses of both victory and defeat.”

The eleventh chapter “Teacher and Disciple” is one of the finest chapters in the book. Sane Guruji began with the observation “Devotion to teacher is a sweet and poetic aspect of Bharatiya Sanskruti”. He has given a beautiful exposition of the relationship between the Guru and the disciple. Sane Guruji made a distinction between the instructor and the Guru in the following way : “We can hold the instructor's hand and let him lead us into the outer courtyard of knowledge. But only the Guru can take us into the inner sanctuary of knowledge.” Sane Guruji further said : “When a disciple comes with a real thirst for knowledge and in a spirit of humility, the Guru does not ask questions about his caste or ancestry. -- The Guru teaches us how to become restless, to the point of being obsessed, in our search for knowledge in a specific field.”

Sane Guruji summed up the discourse with the following observation : "As long as human beings have yearning to make their lives pure, clean and serene, this Guru-Shishya relationship will remain. ... And through this relationship the future of our world can be rendered good and auspicious."

The twelfth chapter 'The Four ends of Life' is devoted to the discussion about the four Purusharthas - Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Sane Guruji stated that the attitude reflected in accepting Artha and Kama along with Dharma and Moksha was realistic. He said that in Hindu religion, the normal urges and cravings of life were accepted. He stated that satisfaction of these urges was consistent with Dharma so long as man observed restraint while satisfying them. The quotations from Saints like Tukaram and Ramdas and from Ravindranath, which Sane Guruji gave in order to substantiate his arguments, were highly appropriate.

There follows then the chapter 'The four Stages of Life'. -- Sane Guruji elucidated the duties of a person in the four Asramas -- Bramhacharya, Gruhastha, Vana-Prastha and Sanyas. Sane Guruji wrote : "Bharatiya Sanskruti tells us that every human being is born with the burden of three debts -- debt to the sages, debt to the parents and debt to God... In the stage of Bramhacharya, we repay our debt to the sages -- The Guru -- by acquiring knowledge. After that during the Gruhasthashram, we repay our debt to the parents by producing children and bringing them up properly. And during the Vanaprastha and Sanyasa, we repay our debt to God." The discussion in this chapter is scholarly and Sane Guruji also brought out the difference between the static approach of the orthodox people to the four Ashramas and dynamic approach of Mahatma Gandhi.

Then follows the chapter "The Essence of Womanhood." Sane Guruji has described how women in India, patiently suffered for the husband and the family. While appreciating the infinite capacity for sacrifice in women, Sane Guruji also observed that this must not result in abject submission to man and in weakness and a sense of helplessness. This chapter might appear conventional in the context of the movement for the emancipation of women and their revolt against the tyranny of man, at present.

The next chapter is on "Loving relationship with non-human Nature". Sane Guruji described how the farmer loved the bullocks as members of the family. He also gave instances of man's attachment to birds and beasts. The next two chapters 'Non-Violence' and 'The

Worship of Strength', must be read together. Sane Guruji has forcefully argued that non-violence was altogether different from cowardice and has shown how Gandhiji taught Indians to strive for "The non-violence of the brave", while fighting for freedom. Sane Guruji also argued fervently against violence, which betrayed man's cruelty and which was self-defeating. Sane Guruji while discussing the ideal of strength, also pointed out the significance of moral strength.

In the chapter "The Culmination of the Ideal", Sane Guruji described the content of character by referring to Rama, to King Harishchandra and to many others in ancient times and also to the great leaders who led India's freedom struggle in the recent past. Sane Guruji, observed that character and integrity made life beautiful and that Indians would have to make a determined effort to develop National character.

The four chapters on "The concept of Incarnation, 'Image Worship', 'Symbols' and 'Shri Krishna and his Flute' form one group. Through these chapters, Sane Guruji brought out the glory and the grandeur of the ideals, accepted by Bharatiya Sanskruti. The chapter on Shri Krishna is a poem written in prose. Sane Guruji, while describing the qualities of Shri Krishna, rose to poetic heights.

The last chapter 'Poetry of Death' is one of the finest chapters in this book. Sane Guruji discussed the idea of death in a philosophic manner. He has shown how Bharatiya Sanskruti accepted Death as a natural phenomenon and has asked people not to regard it as a terrifying experience. Sane Guruji has expressed his point of view in the following words : "Death is one of the forms of God. Life and death are both auspicious. In fact, life and death are essentially the same. It is out of the night that dawn emerges and from dawn eventually night arises. Life is the fruit of death and death is the fruit of life."

"Bharatiya Sanskruti" is a memorable book, the relevance of which is felt all the more keenly today. This is not a book written by a scholar or a commentator (Mimansak) living in an ivory tower. It is a book by a social activist whose heroic struggle against untouchability, broke the age-old taboos and compelled the orthodox Brahmins to throw open the doors of the Temple at Pandharpur so that the so called untouchables would have a Darshan of God Vitthal. Sane Guruji's historic fast at Pandharpur, made the society conscious of the real content of religion. Sane Guruji pointed out that organised religion and orthodox traditions had distorted religion and had divided

Hindu Society by claiming that there were high castes and low castes and that men were superior to women. Sane Guruji, on the other hand wanted religious practises to be consistent with the vision of oneness (Advaita), because with this vision religion could become an instrument of social change and progress.

“Bharatiya Sanskruti” is based on Sane Guruji's perceptive study of Gita and Upanishads, particularly Ishawasya Upanishad. Sane Guruji, while arguing that Hinduism was a way of life, showed what that way was. He showed that the way was not that of injustice and hatred, as was propounded by the orthodox people and by fanatics. Hinduism, according to Sane Guruji, was at heart a search for harmony. That is the message of the monumental book by Sane Guruji -- “Bharatiya Sanskruti”. Prof. Jayant Joshi an eminent thinker from Gujrat described the book “Bharatiya Sanskruti” as “Sane Guruji's manifesto of new spiritualism-- his way towards social salvation.” To Sane Guruji, ethics based on holistic science was true spirituality. Prof. Jayant Joshi rightly observed that “Bharatiya Sanskruti” by Sane Guruji ardently advocated “Gandhian Hindutva” which was in fact the real nature of Hinduism.



INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL INTERESTS

Sane Guruji had wide intellectual interests. He was a keen student of literature who had read almost all the classics in different languages. As a political activist, he had read books on politics, economics and sociology and was a confirmed socialist. He wrote two booklets -- "स्वातंत्र्याचा अर्थ" (The Meaning of Liberty) and "समाजवाद हा एकच मार्ग" (Socialism - The only Way). In these booklets he had stated his ideological position in a convincing manner. Sane Guruji played the role of a teacher and a guide to workers in the Socialist Party and gave a correct orientation to the young workers who had joined the socialist movement. He had translated 'The Story of Civilization' by Will Durrant. He also wrote 'Swadeshi Samaj', 'Rashtra Dharma', 'Samaj Dharma' and 'Rashtriya Hindoo Dharma' -- pamphlets which were very useful for the workers in the rural areas who could not read the original books in English. Sane Guruji had a great admiration for Ravindranath Tagore. His translation of "Sadhana" by Tagore is exquisite. Sane Guruji thought that the political workers should not read books merely on politics, but should also be familiar with these writings of Tagore, which expressed Tagore's vision about the future of India. Sane Guruji had highest respect for Sister Nivedita, the co-worker of Swami Vivekananda and wrote a fine pen-picture of Sister Nivedita. He translated some of her important writings into Marathi. Sane Guruji regarded it his duty to enlighten the youths on the major problems of life. He was never dogmatic in his thinking, and made an effort to stimulate the youths in such a manner that they would become their own path-finders in political and social life. With this end in view Sane Guruji translated many books in Marathi. These books chosen by Sane Guruji for translation showed that he had a correct notion about the intellectual equipment necessary for a person working for the transformation of Indian Society.

Sane Guruji's interest in culture and religion was not confined to

Hindu culture and Hindu religion only. Just as he studied Bhagwad Gita and Upanishads, he also read Holy Koran and the Bible. He read and studied the life and teachings of Buddha and Mahaveer. He had read many books on China and studied the teachings of Confucias. He said to his friends, "Life is so short that even if I would devote all my time to the study of religions, I shall only get some glimpses of truth." In spite of a very busy life of political action, Sane Guruji read voraciously. He read many books on the life of Prophet Mohammad and his teachings. He wanted to write at least three books on Islamic Culture. However, he could not complete the project. After his death in 1950, his friends found amongst his papers a manuscript which was a biography of Mohammad. M. Harris, a friend of Sane Guruji, an ardent freedom fighter and a socialist, read the manuscript and suggested that after editing, it should be published. The book was published after nearly fourteen years in 1964 on 24th December -- the birthday of Sane Guruji. Acharya Vinoba Bhave wrote a brief foreword to the book. Dr. Zakir Hussain, who was then the Vice-President of India welcomed the publication of the book. The title of the book 'Islami Sanskruti' is rather misleading, particularly because that owing to this title, the readers would expect a book similar to 'Bharatiya Sanskruti'. In the first place, this was found as a manuscript. Sane Guruji might have retouched the book. Secondly this was only the first part of the project undertaken by Sane Guruji. In the first chapter Sane Guruji wrote: "The study of any human society must include a study of three aspects viz. the material, the emotional and the intellectual." He said that while studying the material aspect one must take into account, the geographic conditions, the economic order and also the sociological aspect. The first seven chapters of the book were devoted to the description of the material conditions in Arabia in the sixth century. Sane Guruji described the way of living of Bedouins and the material conditions in Arabia. He wrote a chapter "Poetry in the life of Arabs", and another chapter -- "The life of women in Arab society." The rest of the book was an account of the life of Mohammed. This was not a critical biography. It was a factual account of the different phases in the life of Prophet Mohammad. From this account, it was evident that Sane Guruji had highest regard for the Prophet, particularly for his generosity, his courage and above all the emphasis on equality in his teachings. As Dr. Zakir Hussain wrote, "The book 'Islamic Sanskruti' is an exquisite example of sympathetic understanding and a genuine appreciation of the life of

Prophet Mohammad and his mission. The author has, in an unusual measure, succeeded in entering the spirit of his subject." There are not many books in Marathi on Islam, and the book is a distinct contribution towards a better understanding of Islam and the Prophet of that religion. The book was Sane Guruji's precious contribution to national integration.

When Sane Guruji was in Trichanapalli prison during the civil Disobedience Movement in 1931, he read the English translation of 'Kural' by the great Tamil Poet Tiruvalluvar. The original poem in Tamil was called 'Tamil Veda'. It was translated into English by S. S. Aiyar, the great revolutionary who was in England for some years and who later on came to and settled at Pondicherry. S. S. Aiyar was a great Tamil Scholar and had translated the original work in a very faithful and effective manner. Kural was earlier translated into Latin and later on in French. Aiyar had expressed the hope that the book should be translated into Marathi. In Kural there are 1330 Shlokas, in 133 Adhyayas. There are two lines in every verse. Kural is divided in three parts. In the first part, the poet deals with Dharma. In the Second, he writes on Artha and the third part is devoted to the discussion of Kama. Tiruvallavar was a Saint Poet, who belonged to the Vallu Caste, which was regarded as a backward caste. Tiruvalluvar also worked as a weaver. The Mahars in Tamil Nadu worked as weavers. 'Kural' was the precious gift given to society by Tiruvalluvar.

In the first four chapters, Tiruvalluvar praised God. Some parts contained indirect references to the Teachings of Buddha and Mahavir. There were also some echoes of Bible in 'Kural'. The poet Tiruvalluvar did not belong to any sect. He collected the ethical principles of all religions and presented them in his poem. The poem appealed to Sane Guruji because Tiruvalluvar had an intense affection for children and Sane Guruji also had similar feelings. Moreover, Sane Guruji's attitude to life was similar to that of Tiruvalluvar. The book 'Kural' is full of noble thoughts and beautiful poetry. Sane Guruji took the help of his Tamil friends in prison while translating the book. Sane Guruji, who in the last phase of his life started the Movement of Antar Bharati, had made an earnest effort for fostering emotional bonds with the Tamil language by translating Kural in Marathi at an early phase of his life. Thus, the work of translation of Kural was the beginning of the noble idea of Antar Bharati. 'Kural', had the sanctity of Gangotri.

Sane Guruji thought it necessary to convey the message of

Bhagwad Gita to the common reader in a simple way. He also wanted to give expression to his feelings about Bhagwad Gita. He, therefore, wrote the book “गीता हृदय” ‘The Heart of Gita’. He did not attempt to give any philosophic interpretation. He stated the message of Bhagwad Gita and pointed out that Gita played the role of a friend, guide and philosopher for the common man.

Sane Guruji wanted people to understand the nature of Art. He, therefore, translated Tolstoy's ‘Essay on Art’ and other essays. Sane Guruji also wrote an essay “कला म्हणजे काय ?” (What is Art ?) in which he stated his ideological position about art in an unequivocal manner. These books on diverse subjects give some glimpses of Sane Guruji's wide intellectual interests and throw light on his noble concept of culture.



SANE GURUJI AS A JOURNALIST

Sane Guruji, as a political activist forcefully propogated the ideas and the ideals dear to him. His lecture tours were very successful and thousands of people eagerly listened to his speeches. He could set the hearts of the people on fire and arouse them for sacrificing everything for India's Freedom. Sane Guruji was also aware of the fact that the written word was as powerful as the spoken one and, therefore, wrote in various newspapers and periodicals. Sane Guruji's career as a journalist started when he was a teacher at Amalner. He started a handwritten, one page journal for the students in the hostel. The journal 'Chhatralaya' was very popular and the students in Pratap High School requested Sane Guruji to start a magazine for them. Sane Guruji who was very eager to inculcate the spirit of idealism in his students, started a magazine, "Vidyarthi". The magazine evoked a great response and many students who were influenced by Sane Guruji's personality and style, joined the Freedom struggle along with their revered Guruji. The magazine, *Vidyarthi* thus came to an abrupt end.

As a journalist, Sane Guruji did not just write editorials. He was also an efficient correspondent, who described an event effectively. More than that, he was a very painstaking and a successful reporter. In Dhule jail, when Acharya Vinoba Bhave gave his discourses on Bhagwad Geeta, Sane Guruji took down notes and gave a verbatim report of the discourses. When Vinobaji read the report, he heartily thanked Sane Guruji for communicating all he had said in his discourses.

After his release from prison, Sane Guruji again resumed political work at Amalner. He championed the cause of the mill-workers in Khandesh. At that time he keenly felt the need for starting a newspaper. On 6th April 1938, he started the weekly "Congress". In the first editorial he wrote that he had no money but was confident that

people would come forward to give him full support in his new venture. His editorials in the weekly 'Congress' were radical in tone, and were highly appealing. The weekly 'Congress' was immensely popular all over Khandesh and people eagerly awaited every issue. The British Government was very much angered by Sane Guruji's criticism of foreign rule and prosecuted Sane Guruji for inflammatory writing in 'Congress'. The Government asked Sane Guruji to furnish a huge amount as a security and forced the closure of the press. As a result, Sane Guruji published the last issue of weekly 'Congress' on 18th March 1940 and bade good-bye to his readers, with a heavy heart.

When Sane Guruji was working in the underground movement in 1942, he wrote the bulletins and thousands of copies of these bulletins were circulated all over Maharashtra. During the underground Movement Sane Guruji wrote: "क्रांतीच्या मार्गावर" (On the way to Revolution). This writing was almost a model in journalism of a revolutionary nature, because in it there was a rare combination of facts and views. After his release from prison Sane Guruji contributed articles to many newspapers. It was his earnest desire to start a newspaper of his own. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi came as a great shock to Sane Guruji. He decided to take up cudgels against the communal frenzy and started the Daily, 'Kartavya' (The Duty). However, owing to financial stringency he could publish 'Kartavya' for only four months. During this period, 'Kartavya' earned a place of respect among Marathi journals. Sane Guruji's onslaught on Hindu fanatics was full of fire and he made people realize that Gandhiji's noble ideals would alone take India to the path of peace and progress.

After the closure of the Daily Kartavya, Sane Guruji decided to start a weekly. On 15th August, 1948 : 'Sadhana Weekly' saw the light of the day. The editorship of Sadhana was the most glorious chapter in Sane Guruji's life as a journalist. Sane Guruji's editorials were brilliant pieces of prose writing, conveying an original point of view on many subjects. The editorials in which arguments were always substantiated by facts were an expression of Sane Guruji's lofty idealism and his rare vision. He made an effort to make Sadhana Weekly a socio-political and also a cultural journal. After the tragic demise of Sane Guruji in 1950, eminent political thinkers and leaders of Sane Guruji's persuasion carried on his mission. Sane Guruji had to struggle hard, suffered reverses and yet he made a significant contribution to Marathi journalism and has left his footprints on the sands of time.



SUMMING UP

Sane Guruji was a prolific writer who wrote eighty-seven books and translated fourteen books written by eminent writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Will Durant, Tiruvalluvar and others. Sane Guruji was a teacher at heart and wanted to inculcate in the impressionable minds of boys and girls noble ideals and great thoughts. He wanted to widen the horizon of their minds, and create in them a patriotic fervour. He wanted these boys and girls to appreciate the beauty of Nature, and to realise that selfishness was ugly and sacrifice was beautiful. He wanted to promote in the minds of boys and girls the attitude of self-respect and also respect for others. He desired that they should play, sing and be merry and he wanted that their taste should be so cultivated that they would read and appreciate literature, learn to live a simple life and think in a noble manner. He wanted the boys and girls to understand that there was great joy in sharing the happiness and sorrows of others, in sympathising with the downtrodden and the oppressed and above all in fighting against injustice. But he did not do this in a diadactic manner. He wrote nineteen short and interesting biographies of great leaders and thinkers with a view to holding noble ideals before boys and girls. He told them interesting stories. He translated or freely rendered into Marathi stories written by great writers like Tolstoy, Hardy, Victor Hugo and others. He also retold some of the folk tales from Bengali, Hindi and even from the Chinese language. Besides this, he wrote delightful essays and letters in which he brought out the beauty of the different moods of Nature, of wild flowers and ordinary birds and beasts, and emphasised the nobility of mind reflected through small actions of simple men and women.

Sane Guruji never gave sermons. He entertained children, endeared himself to them and through suggestion and sympathy cultivated in them a taste for noble life. Sane Guruji, once remarked, "I tell stories to boys and girls, write for them and in doing this, I show them the

garden of life. They learn to appreciate colour and fragrance. Entertaining children is my way of worshipping God.”

Sane Guruji also wanted to stimulate the minds of youths who had joined the freedom movement. He was aware of the fact that mere patriotism was not enough. He, therefore, wrote books in which he explained the content of freedom and tried to inculcate in youths the ideal of equality and fraternity. He wrote simple booklets on political, social and economic problems and also translated some books like ‘Sadhana’, ‘Swadeshi-Samaj’, ‘Rashtra Dharma’ and ‘Rashtriya Hindu Dharma’. His book ‘Bharatiya Sanskruti’ influenced the ideas of many social workers and gave them a correct perspective regarding the cultural and social problems in our society. In Marathi ten books have been written on the life and teachings of Sane Guruji. Raja Mangalwedhekar has written a beautiful biography of Sane Guruji, which is an authentic account of the noble life of the saintly patriot and writer. Three students have written Doctoral Thesis on Sane Guruji's Literature, one of these is on the educational significance of Sane Guruji's writings.

Some writers in Marathi have criticised Sane Guruji and dismissed his writings as sentimental. They did not take into consideration the fact that most of his writings were for adolescent readers. These critics have at the same time admitted that “श्यामची आई” and “भारतीय संस्कृती” were significant contributions to Marathi Literature.

Sane Guruji's life and his literary writings were indivisible. His writings were an expression of his saintly personality. At the same time, his personality would have remained incomplete and would not have flowered if he had not written stories for children, serious books for youths and above all “श्यामची आई” and “भारतीय संस्कृती”. Sane Guruji was an ardent fighter for freedom who aroused people through songs such as --

उठू दे देश, पेढू दे देश
येथून तेथून सारा
पेढू दे देश

(Let my country arise and become a burning flame.) Sane Guruji did not merely propagate the ideals of liberty and equality. He staked his life for those ideals. His writings and speeches cast a spell on people because his words conveyed the fire in his heart, his warm sympathies for those who suffered and his earnest desire to make life a thing of beauty which was a joy for ever. Sane Guruji fervently argued that beauty was never confined to drawing rooms but was to be found in

huts and streets. He said, life would be beautiful when poverty and inequality would be eradicated, when every hand would get work and when people would live in harmony with each other. It was necessary to understand Sane Guruji's notion of beauty for a genuine understanding of his writings.

The wellknown observation -- "Style is the man", fully applied to Sane Guruji. The simplicity of his style was an expression of the transparent sincerity and earnest idealism of his mind. Sane Guruji has been acknowledged as a great stylist because his simplicity was inimitable. There was a peculiar grace and beauty in his style. Words flowed from his pen so naturally that while reading his prose, readers feel as if they were watching the Ganges river in the planes. The words which belonged to every day life were invested with a rare charm by Sane Guruji. Words were used by him not just for meaning but also for sound and for the association of ideas.

Sane Guruji's mind was a treasure house of great books in Sanskrit, Marathi and English. He was never pedantic and yet appropriate quotations were woven in the texture of his prose in a natural manner. He would easily recollect the beautiful lines from Kalidas and Bhavbhuti, gems of thoughts from Emerson and the imaginative writings of Tagore. Quotations from Tukaram, Kabir and Ramdas crept into his writings naturally and gracefully. While reading Sane Guruji's prose, readers felt as if the Parijat tree was showering its tender flowers on mother-earth. Sane Guruji wrote as he spoke and spoke as he felt. He never had to grope for words. There was an uninterrupted flow of words, and also a serene flow of ideas. Sane Guruji was the son of the soil. He moved among men and women, who had not shut their lips on poetry. Sane Guruji in his writings reflected the poetic beauty of the 'ओवी' sung by women in Maharashtra. The content of Sane Guruji's writings and his words were indivisible and inseparable. Sane Guruji's personality and his style were like sense and sound. While carrying on the heritage of the Saint Poets and also the tradition of folk literature, he gave expression to all his thoughts and feelings, and enriched Marathi language in a unique way.

Sane Guruji regarded literature as an instrument of creating bonds of love between people. He did not discuss the idea of national integration but explained to people the noble idea of 'Antar Bharati', an institution which would strive to enthuse people to learn different Indian languages and read literature written in those languages so that they would come closer to each other and realise the ideal of 'unity in

diversity'. Unfortunately Sane Guruji did not live to develop "Antar Bharati" -- an institution which would have created a deep understanding and bonds of love among the people speaking different languages and yet living alike.

The tragic manner in which Sane Guruji ended his life in 1950 came as a great shock to people and the whole of Maharashtra grieved over the death of this saint in modern times. Acharya Vinoba Bhave, who had great affection for Sane Guruji said, "Sane Guruji was अमृतस्य पुत्र. It was true that inspite of his love for children, his interest in literature and in political and social problems, inspite of the satisfaction he derived by participating in the freedom struggle, Sane Guruji was a restless soul. He gave expression to the agonies of his mind through some of his poems. His social and political life enabled him to develop a contact with people and a close association with a number of political leaders and idealist youths. But in spite of this, Sane Guruji was a lonely man. He always withdrew into the shell of his mind. N. G. Goray, a great thinker, a great writer and a close associate of Sane Guruji wrote, "Sane Guruji's mind was qualitatively different from ours. To me, he was an enigma. Death exercised a great fascination over him. Let us not judge him by our standards. He was so near and yet so far. Let us only make an effort to understand him."

Acharya Atre, the famous Marathi writer remarked in his editorial on Sane Guruji's death -- "Sane Guruji was a great poet who kissed death."



11

(A) Books written by Sane Guruji

SADHANA PRAKASHAN, Pune

Sunder Patre (Part I to III)	Shyamchi Patre
Bapujinchya Goad Goshti (Part I to VI)	
Dhadpadnari Mule (Part I & II)	Kumaranpudheel Karye
Nava Prayog	Sadhana
Islami Sanskriti	Mazi Daivate
Jeevanache Shilpakar	Bharatiya Naree
Lokamanya Tilak	Apale Nehru
Bhagwan Shrikrishna	Kavale
Mori Gay	Digambar Rai
Shri Shivraj	Sakshartechya Katha
Darubandichya Katha	Goshtirup Vinobaji
Amacha Shyam	Itihasacharya Rajwade
Samaj Dharma	Kala ani iter Nibandh
Pandit Ishwarchand Vidyasagar	Diary
Patri (Poems)	

CONTINENTAL PRAKASHAN, Pune

Ramacha Shela	Amol Goshti
Kural	Vishram
Bharatiya Sanskriti	
Bharatacha Shodha	
(Translation of 'Discovery of India' by Jawaharlal Nehru)	
Manava Jatichi Katha	
(Translation of 'Story of Civilization')	

PUNE VIDYARTHI GRIHA, Pune

Shyamchi Aii

INDRAYANI SAHITYA, Pune

Shabri	Mulansathi Phule
Sunder Katha	Stree-Jeevan (Part I & II)
Shramanari Laxmi	Teen Mule
Kranti	Sati

K. B. DHAVALÉ PRAKASHAN, Mumbai

Goad Goshti (Part I to X)	Dhadpadnara Shyam
Swargateel Mal	

DESHMUKH & CO. Pune

Punarjanma	Astik
Sandhya	Sonya Maruti
Na Khant Na Khed	
(Translation of 'With no regrets' by Krishna Hattisingh)	
Nila Pakshi	Goad Nibandha
Apan Sare Bhau	Gotya
Miree	Swarageeya Theva
Navajeeva	Durdaivi
Chintanika	

AKSHAR BHANDAR, Pune

Chandrabhagechya Walawanti	Swapna ani Satya
Meg Chi Yang ani iter Goshti	Vichar Gatha
Vishwa Darshan	Vishwa Bharati
Himalayachi Shikhre	

HANUMAN PRAKASHAN, Pune

Sonsakhali	Mahatma Gandhi Darshan
Jeevan Kalaha	Jeevan Vikas

VENUS PRAKASHAN, Pune

Kamal ani Phule	Namdar Gokhale (Charitra)
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NAVBHARAT PRAKASHAN, Mumbai

Kalingadachya Sali

SANE GURUJI KATHAMALA, Mumbai

Shevanta

CONTINENTAL BOOK SERVICE, Pune

Asprushyodhhar (A play)

(B) Biographies of Sane Guruji

Sane Gurujeenchi Jeevan Gatha
-- Raja Mangalwedhekar

Sane Guruji -- Ozarate Darshan
-- Apte Guruji

Sane Guruji -- Jeevan Darshan
-- Waman Chorghade

Sane Guruji -- Jeevan Parichaya
-- Yadunath Thatte

Sane Guruji -- Sulabh Jeevan Parichaya
-- Sheela Bhadra

Sane Gurujinchi Jeevan Sadhana
-- Vasant Bapat

Adhunik Sant Sane Guruji
-- Rambhau Bhoge

Bhale Sane Guruji
-- P. P. Gokhale

Mulanchi Maya-Mauli
-- V. S. Gavankar

(C) Books on Sane Guruji

Sane Guruji

-- Yadunath Thatte (National Book Trust)

Mrutyuche Chumban Ghenara Mahakavi

-- Acharya Atre (Sadhana Prakashan)

Matrudharmi Sane Guruji

-- P. L. Deshpande (Sadhana Prakashan)

Sane Gurujinchi Jeevan Sadhana

-- Vasant Bapat (Sadhana Prakashan)

Sane Guruji - Jeevan Parichaya

-- Yadunath Thatte (Indrayani Prakashan)

Sane Guruji - Vyakti ani Kartrutva

-- N. L. Vaidya

Sane Guruji - Ozarate Darshan

-- Apte Guruji

Sane Guruji - Eka Jeevandarshan

-- Waman Ghorpade

August Krantiche Acharya

-- Harekrishna Desai

Adhunik Sant Sane Guruji

-- Raja Mangalwedhekar

Asa hota. Senani

-- Dr. Rambhau Joshi

Sane Guruji

-- T. G. Bapat